

*Orthodoxy and Charity united:*

In several Reconciling

ESSAYS

ON THE

Law and Gospel, Faith and Works;

VIZ.

ESSAY I. The Substance or Matter of the Gospel.

II. The Form of the Gospel.

III. The Use of the Law under the Gospel.

IV. Mistaken Ways of coming to God without *Christ*.

V. A plain and easy Account of Saving Faith, or coming to God by *Jesus Christ*.

VI. A Reconciling Thought on various Controversies about Faith and Salvation.

VII. Against Uncharitableness.

VIII. The Difficulties in Scripture, and the different Opinions of Christians.

IX. An Apology for Christians of different Sentiments.

*by Dr Watts*

*Speaking the Truth in Love. Ephes. iv. 15.*

L O N D O N:

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OF THE  
PREFACE

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Essays was written above  
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more than thirty. The Author finds  
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One of these Papers indeed, found its way into the World the very Year in which it was written ; the very

Design of it was to exemplify the Title of this Book, and it has been often since solicited to be printed again: But it was delay'd for many Years, till the Author had formed a Collection of Papers of this Sort large enough to compose a moderate Volume; and the Reader will be sufficiently informed of the present Reason of this Publication, by a mere explaining of the Words of the Title, *Orthodoxy and Charity united.*

By the Word *Orthodoxy*, the Author means all those *Christian* Doctrines which were generally approved in the last Age, so far as he knows at least, by almost all the *Protestant Dissenters* in the Nation; even those great Doctrines on which the *Reformation* from the Church of *Rome* was built; and they continued so all the time these *Essays* were writing, and long before, in the general good Esteem of the Churches, as being conformable



formable to the Instructions of *Christ* and his *Apostles*. It is needless in this Place to reckon them all up particularly, but in general they were such as these.

1. By the Fall of the first Man, he, together with his Posterity, lost their Innocence and their Immortality, their Bodies were subjected to Diseases and Death, their natural Inclinations were perverted from that which is good, and there was a strange prevailing Bias in human Nature, even from its Infancy, to that which is Evil.

2. In order to their Recovery from this Ruin, there is not only a Necessity of the Pardon of their Sins, and Reconciliation of their Persons to God, but there is need also that their sinful Natures be healed, and renewed by sanctifying Grace, in order to restore Men to Virtue and Piety, *i. e.* to the Love of God and their Fellow-Creatures.

3. The Son of God, who in the Language of Scripture is *one with the Father*, came down from Heaven to take Flesh, and therein to fulfil the Duties of the Law, and give an Example of perfect Holiness: And then he was appointed to suffer Death as a Sacrifice and Atonement for the Sins of Men, that Mankind might thereby obtain Pardon and the Favour of God.

4. There is a Necessity also that Sinners should heartily repent of their Sins, return to God, and be renew'd to the Principles and Temper of Holiness, in order to their complete Recovery to Eternal Life and Happiness.

5. Besides this Repentance and Returning to God, it is also required that they believe in the Name of *Jesus Christ* their Saviour, or trust in him with a humble Expectation of the Favour of God through him: And 'tis through this Faith they are to be justified and accepted of God.

6. They are also obliged to obey the Law of God, as far as this feeble and imperfect State admits of, during their whole Life, and still to grow up towards Perfection therein.

7. When such Persons die, their Souls are convey'd to a State of Peace and Rest in the Presence of God, till the great Day of the Resurrection, when their Bodies shall rise again from the Dead, and the whole Person, Body and Soul, be made happy for ever in the Favour and Presence of God their Maker.

These Doctrines were generally profess'd at the time of the *Reformation*, by *Protestants* abroad and at home, and these are the Sett of Principles which have been usually called *Orthodoxy* or right Sentiments.

Now it has unhappily fallen out, that many of those who have received and profess'd these important Doctrines, have differ'd also in many lesser Points, such as the *Logical* Relations of some of these Doctrines to



one another, that is, *Whether Faith or Works be Conditions or Consequents of their Justification and Acceptance; what is the essential Difference between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace, or the Law and the Gospel, &c.* as well as in several particular Practices of *divine Worship, such as Ceremonies, Vestures, imposed Forms of Prayer, &c.* and they have so far quarrell'd about these Things as too much to neglect and abandon that *Christian Love and Charity* they ought to have maintained, according to their general Acknowledgement of the great and necessary Truths and Rules of Christianity, and hereby they have in many Instances lost that Duty and Character of good *Christians*, (*viz.*) to *Love one another.*

Now since these unhappy and uncharitable Practices, even amongst some good Men, have prevail'd even to this Day, it is the Design of these *Essays* to endeavour the Recovery of these

these Persons, who unite in these Principles, to charitable Sentiments and Practices towards one another.

Here it will be very natural to enquire, Where is there found amongst all these *Essays*, any Attempt to reconcile those to the *Christian* Love and Charity of others, who while they profess the *Christian Religion*, yet oppose, renounce or deny the great Doctrines of the atoning Sacrifice of *Christ*, or his Propitiation for Sin by his Death?

All the Answer that can be given is this: The Author would gladly have done it, that the whole Book might be of a Piece, and every Page might overflow with Love, if he could, after the turning over his New Testament, have met with any evident Instances, or Examples, any plain Rules or Requirements of such *Christian* Charity expressed towards Persons of this Character in all the sacred Writings.

## The P R E F A C E.

But the Language of Scripture gives no Encouragement to such a Charity; for this Doctrine is not any where number'd among the doubtful Disputables of our Religion, the lesser Things of Christianity, such as *Meats and Drinks*, and Observation of *Days*, and *outward Forms* of Worship; but it is spoken of as a matter of far higher Importance, and I think seems to be necessary to constitute *Christianity* itself.

This Doctrine contains in it the highest and the kindest Design toward Men, for which our blessed Saviour came down from Heaven; 'twas for this very Reason he came into this World, (*viz.*) to give his *Life a Ransom* for Sinners, *Matth. xx. 28.* and 'tis repeated in *Mark x. 45.* So that those who depart from and renounce this Article, renounce the kindest Design of the Coming and the Death of *Christ*, and they seem, by the Words of the holy Writings, to be exposed to another sort of Sentence,  
from



from which may the Grace of God recover and preserve them!

In the mean time, I hope those who heartily unite in their Sentiments of these great Doctrines which I have mentioned, and maintain a correspondent Practice of strict Holiness and Dependence upon *Jesus Christ* our great High-Priest, and our Sacrifice, will be taught by some of these Papers, to learn the Duties of *Christian* Love more perfectly, agreeable to the original Design of the holy Founder of our Religion.

It should be observed here, that though the chief part of these *Essays* were written at the time which is mention'd, yet there happen to be now and then a few Lines or Pages, and some few Citations from elder or later Authors, which were not all written or inserted at that time.

Let it be observed also, that all the Characters here mentioned are general and indefinite; and there is not one Character or Name, that is now  
2 written

written in these Papers, or ever was, that was design'd to be apply'd to any particular Person: For the Author avoided it with Care in all these Writings, and in all his Reviews of them, that no single Person whatsoever should be so particularly described, as to imagine himself to be intended, and much less to be distinguished by any Reader. May the divine Blessing attend every humble Attempt to establish the *Christian* Faith, and to confirm and enlarge our Love. *Amen.*

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THE

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ESSAY

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## ESSAY I.

### *The* SUBSTANCE *or* MATTER *of* *the* GOSPEL.

#### S E C T. I.

**T**HE Word, *Gospel*, is used in more Senses than one. Sometimes it signifies the History of the Life and Doctrine, the Death and Resurrection of Christ. So *Mark* i. 1. *The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.* And so 'tis used in common Speech, when we call the Writings of the four Evangelists *the four Gospels*. But in the most proper and usual Sense of it in Scripture, it signifies a *Discovery of Divine Mercy, through a Mediator, to Mankind fallen into Sin and Misery*; therefore in Greek it is called *εὐαγγέλιον*, or *Glad Tidings*.

The *English* Name indeed, as derived from its *Saxon* Original, signifies only the *Word of God*: Yet it is now peculiarly applied to the *Word of his Grace*, which reveals Salvation to sinful and miserable Man, and therefore it is often called the *Covenant of Grace*.

This Salvation is made up of many Benefits or Blessings, Part of which are bestowed

ed in this World, and the rest in the World that is to come. The Revelation of these Benefits, and of the Foundation on which they stand, and of the Way whereby we come to be Partakers of them, is the *Matter, Sum and Substance* of the Gospel, in its most general Notion among Christians.

This Gospel was not revealed all at once in its full Glory to Mankind. There have been several Editions of it, or gradual Discoveries of this Grace in all the former Ages of the World.

As soon as ever *Adam* had sinned, and ruined himself and his Posterity too, by laying the Foundation of their Sin and Misery, it pleased God to publish this Gospel by the Promise of a Saviour, when he told our Mother *Eve*, that *her Seed should bruise the Head of the Serpent* that had deceived her, *Gen. iii. 15.* This, by our Divines, is usually called *the first Gospel*; for, in the modern Language of the New Testament it signifies, that *Jesus Christ should come into this World to destroy the Works of the Devil,* 1 John iii. 8.

Doubtless *Noah*, the second Father of Mankind, had some farther Discoveries made to him, when the Rainbow was appointed as the Seal of a gracious Covenant betwixt God and Man: For the very Promise of the Continuance of the comfortable Seasons of the Year, being given to Man in a Way  
of



of Mercy, do imply that God would not be irreconcilable to his fallen Creatures. Nor can we reasonably suppose but that *Adam* and *Noah*, and all those most ancient Patriarchs, had larger Explications and Comments of the first Promise given them than *Moses* has recorded.

This Gospel was renewed by Revelations made to *Abraham*, when the *Messiah*, the Saviour, was promised to spring out of his Family; *in thy Seed shall all Nations of the Earth be blessed.* Which Promise is expressly called the Gospel, *Gal. iii. 8.* There was also a Type or Pattern of our Justification by Faith in the Way of the Gospel, when *Abraham believed God* in his Promises, and *it was imputed to him for Righteousness*, *Rom. v. 3.*

*Moses* had a much larger Discovery of the Grace and Mercy of God toward sinful Man made to him, and to the *Jews* by him, than all the Patriarchs put together: And this was not only done in the Types, and Figures, and Ceremonies, not only in Altars, Sacrifices, Washings, Sprinklings, Purifications, and in their Redemption from *Egypt*, their miraculous Salvations in the Wilderness, and their safe Conduct to *Canaan*, the Land of promised Rest; but he had many literal and express Revelations of pardoning and sanctifying Grace, which are scattered up and down in the five Books which he

wrote, and which he gave to the Children of *Israel* to direct their Religion. This is also called *the Gospel*, Heb. iv. 2. *To them was the Gospel preached as well as unto us*, as those Words ought to be translated. This same Gospel was afterward confirmed, illustrated and enlarged by succeeding *Prophets* in the several Ages of the *Jewish Church*.

But *God*, who at sundry Times and in divers Manners spoke this Gospel to our Fathers by the *Prophets*, has in these later Days published the same to us in a brighter Manner, by his Son *Jesus*, the promised Saviour, Heb. i. 1. And since the Death and Resurrection of *Christ*, the Apostles being sent by their exalted Lord, have given yet plainer and fuller Declarations of this Gospel to the Children of Men.

And upon this Account it is several Times called the *Gospel of Christ*, not only because the Offices and Grace of *Christ* run through the whole of it, but also because the clearest Discoveries of it are made to the World by *Christ*, and by his Messengers the Apostles.

Now, from this last and fullest Revelation of it in the New Testament, we may derive a fuller and more perfect Knowledge of the Gospel than all the former Ages could attain. Hereby we learn, that the Gospel is a Promise of Salvation from Sin and Hell,

*Hell, by the Death, Righteousness and Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to every one that is sincerely willing to accept of it by coming to Christ, or trusting in him; and it includes also the promised Aid of the Holy Spirit to those who seek it, to enable them to receive this Salvation, and to fit them for the final Possession of the promised Glory. It includes also the Revelation of the future Resurrection, the last Judgment and eternal Life. To this End did the Son of God come into the World, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting Life, John iii. 16.*

This may be made out and explained more at large in the following Manner.

The *Salvation* which the Gospel proposes, is exactly answerable to our present State of Sin and Wretchedness, and fully supplies all the Necessities of fallen Man, his Guilt and deserved Misery, his sinful and corrupted Nature, and his utter Inability to help himself; and therefore it must contain in it Holiness and Happiness, with divine Directions and divine Aids in order to attain them. The *Happiness* of it is a Freedom from that Death and Punishment which we had incurred by Sin, and a Recovery to the Favour of God which we had lost, and everlasting Joy therein. The *Holiness* of it is the Image of God in which we were at first created, which Image was defaced and ruined by Man's first Transgression.



The Foundation of this Salvation is the eternal Mercy and Goodwill of God the Father, to his poor, perishing, sinful Creatures, by the glorious Undertaking and various Transactions and Offices of our Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator, and the several Operations of the Blessed Spirit.

This Salvation, in the whole of it, is contrived and appointed by the various Attributes of God, especially his Wisdom, Power and Goodness, exerting themselves for this Purpose : 'Tis purchased or procured for us by the Death and Sufferings of *Jesus Christ* : 'Tis applied to us by the Work of the Holy Spirit.

We are chosen to partake of all this Salvation, both the Holiness and Happiness of it, by the eternal Goodwill of the Father. We are recovered to the Favour of God, and Happiness, by the Obedience or Righteousness, *the Death and Intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ*, who is the Son of God in our Nature. We are restored to the Image of God and Holiness by the *Spirit of Christ*, that is promised and sent down into this World, to change our Hearts and reform our Lives, and thereby fit us for the heavenly Happiness.

— But what are we to do that we may become Partakers of this Salvation ? For it is not every Son and Daughter of *Adam* who are Possessors of it. Now it is the Gospel that

that reveals this to us, and also *directs* us in it. The appointed Way to partake of this Salvation is by *Believing or Trusting in Christ*; that is, when from a deep Sense of the Evil of Sin, and our Guilt and Danger on that Account, we grow weary and heavy laden with the Burden of our Sins, and surrender or betrust ourselves to the Lord *Jesus Christ*, that by his Death and Obedience we may be saved from Hell, and be accepted unto eternal Life, and that by the *divine Aid* of his Spirit, we may have all the sinful Powers of our Natures renewed and sanctified, and fitted for that Life eternal which *Christ* has purchased. Thus you see this Grace of Faith necessarily draws along with it sincere Repentance for Sin, and Desires after true Holiness.

When we consider that we are by Nature afar off from God, ignorant and averse to all that is holy, we shall find that we are not more able to believe unto Salvation, nor to repent of Sin, at first, than we are to perform Works of Holiness afterwards. Therefore this Gospel provides us with divine Strength to fulfil these Duties; *Christ* is our Strength, as well as our Righteousness. He is exalted to bestow Repentance as well as Forgiveness; and Faith is the Gift of God, who creates us anew in *Christ Jesus* unto good Works, Isa. xlv. Acts v. Eph. ii. and makes us holy by his Spirit, as is before ex-

prest. 'Tis by the Holy Spirit considered eminently as the *Spirit of Christ*, that we are enabled to receive this Salvation at first, and trained up and prepared for the full Possession of it.

It is further also comprehended in this *Gospel*, and promised in this *gracious Constitution of God*, that when we have finished our State of Trial on Earth, our Souls shall be received at Death into the Presence and Enjoyment of God; and our Bodies also shall be raised from the Grave in the great Resurrection Day, and thus our whole Natures shall be made happy together to all Eternity.

This is the *Matter* and *Subject* of the gracious Revelation of God, this the *Method of Salvation*, and the Manner of our partaking of it, which is appointed by God himself, and this is what I call the *Substance of the Gospel*. There are some other Points of Importance that belong to it, but this is the Foundation of all, and comprehensive of the rest.

To sum up the several Parts of it in as few Words as I can, *the Gospel of Christ* is a gracious Constitution of God for the Recovery of sinful Man, by sending his own Son in the Flesh to obey his Law, which Man had broken, to make a proper Atonement for Sin by his Death, and to procure the Favour of God, and eternal Happiness for all



all that believe and repent and receive this offered Salvation, together with a Promise of the Holy Spirit to work this Faith and Repentance in the Hearts of Men, to renew their sinful Natures unto Holiness, to form them fit for this Happiness on Earth, and to bring them to the full Possession of it in Heaven.

All this is so evident from a Variety of Scriptures that might be cited here, that one would think there should be no need to prove it. But there have been some Persons in the last and in the present Age (I chiefly intend the *Socinian* Writers, and those *nominal Christians* who are leaning toward *Deism*) who would impoverish and curtail the *Gospel of Christ*, and make it to consist in little more than mere *natural Religion*. Some of these Persons just make a Shift to persuade themselves to believe the *Bible*, or at least they profess to believe it, because it is the Religion of their Country, but they explain it in so poor, so narrow, so dry, and insipid a Manner as raises it very little above the *Light of Nature*, viz. “ That if  
“ we follow the Dictates of our inward  
“ Reason and our Conscience, in worship-  
“ ping God, and in loving our Neighbours,  
“ according to the Rules which Scripture  
“ hath given us to explain and confirm the  
“ Light of Nature, and herein imitate the  
“ holy Example of our Lord *Jesus Christ*,  
then

“ then our Sins shall be forgiven us by the  
 “ meer Mercy of God, through the Suppli-  
 “ cation and Intercession of so good a Man  
 “ as *Jesus Christ*, and we shall be accepted  
 “ to eternal Life ;” and this without any  
 Dependance on the *Death of Christ* as a pro-  
 per Atonement or Satisfaction for Sin, or any  
 Regard to him as a true and real Sacrifice.  
 + And as for the *Spirit of God*, and his Almighty  
 Operation on the Souls of Men, to enlighten  
 and sanctify them, at least in our Age, this  
 is almost banished out of their Gospel, and  
 finds but little room in their Religion.

I think it necessary therefore to prove,  
 that the *Gospel of Christ* is such a Doctrine  
 as I have described ; and that I shall do by  
 these five Reasons.

## S E C T. II.

I. This Doctrine, which I have now  
 mentioned, of the Restoration of Believers  
 in *Jesus Christ* to the Favour of God, by the  
 atoning Sacrifice and Obedience of *Christ*,  
 and the renewing of sinful Men to God's  
 Image by the Work of the Holy Spirit,  
 and thereby bringing them to eternal Life,  
 is the very Gospel of *Christ*, because it is  
 the very Labour and Business, the chief Scope,  
 Aim and Design of the great Apostle of the  
 Gentiles, in those of his Epistles where he  
 sets himself professedly to explain the Gospel ;  
 and this is what he takes frequent Occasion  
 also to bring into all his Writings. It is his

perpetual Labour to instruct the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in these glorious and unknown Truths: He uses various Forms of Speech to explain them to their Understandings; for “ *I desire, saith he, and determine to —*  
 “ *know nothing among you but Jesus Christ,*  
 “ *and him crucified, i. e. nothing like it;*  
 “ *nothing in Comparison with it. It is the*  
 “ *Cross of Christ, that is and must be the*  
 “ *great Subject of my Ministry; this is*  
 “ *what I am sent to preach, for it is the*  
 “ *Power of God, and the Wisdom of God,*  
 “ *for the Salvation of Men.” Rom. i. 16.*  
 1 Cor. i. 24. and ii. 2.

You find his Letters to the Churches full of such Expressions as these, *Christ died for our Sins. He gave himself for us to redeem us from all Iniquity. We have Redemption thro’ his Blood. God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespases to them. He was made Sin, and a Curse for us. He is our Propitiation, and Atonement. He appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. When we were Enemies we were reconciled to God by his Death. He made Peace by the Blood of his Cross. He was delivered for our Offences, and raised again for our Justification. By the Righteousness of one Man the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life. By the Obedience of one, shall many be made Righteous; and we are justify’d by Faith in him. He teaches us also the Offices of the Holy*



*Holy Spirit. We have Access to God thro' his Spirit. We are purified and sanctified by the Spirit. 'Tis by the Spirit of Christ that we are to mortify the Deeds of the Flesh. We are led by the Spirit; and we are taught to understand this Gospel by the Spirit which he hath given us. We are sealed by this Spirit unto the Day of Redemption. The Spirit dwelling in us is a Pledge and Earnest of our Inheritance in Heaven. Rom. viii. 13. Ephes. ii. 18. and iii. 16. and iv. 23. 2 Thes. ii. 13, &c.*

Now these Expressions of his are to be understood in the common Sense and Meaning of the Words, and not as far-fetch'd Metaphors; for it is evident, that in all this he does not affect the Arts of Oratory, nor assume a magnificent Air of Writing, nor does he raise himself into Sublimities of Style, nor rove in an Enthusiastick Way, when he treats of these Subjects; but while he is explaining to us these great Things of the Gospel, he avoids *the Wisdom of Words* and Oratory, and he talks in a plain rational, and argumentative Method to inform the Minds of Men, and give them the clearest Knowledge of the Truth.

Surely a Person that was sent of God to preach and write the Gospel for the Use of all Nations and future Ages, and even for the ignorant and uninstructed *Barbarians*, would not have expressed himself in this sort  
of

of Language, if he meant no more by it than the *Socinians* do by the Gospel of *Christ*; that is, “ that the Lord *Jesus Christ* “ was a very great Man, but a mere Man “ still; he was a Prophet ordained of God “ to preach up Holiness in greater Degrees “ than it had been before preached, to settle some Points which were left a little “ doubtful by the Light of Nature, to assure us that God would be reconciled to “ Man, and forgive him, if Man repented “ and was sorry for his Sins, and lived as “ well as he could for time to come; and “ that for the Sake of the Prayers of *Christ*, “ who was so very pious, so very religious, “ and so very heavenly a Person, and so “ submissive in his Sufferings to the Will “ of God, he would favour the Penitent “ among Mankind with some Blessings and “ Comforts in this World, and eternal Life “ in the World above. Then when he “ had preached this Doctrine to the World, “ he suffer’d the Death of the Cross, to “ bear witness to the Truth of it, and seal’d “ it with his Blood, and rose again for a “ further Confirmation of the same Doctrine.” Now if this were all the meaning of the *Gospel of Christ*, *St. Paul* would never have preached it in such Language as he did. We must suppose him to be a very unaccurate Writer, a most unintelligible Preacher and a most unfit Man to be made

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an Apostle, and be sent to instruct the ignorant World, if he had expressed himself in such mysterious, figurative, and strange Phrases, and all this while had meant no more by them than what the *Socinians* mean by their Gospel.

Can we think God would have employed such an Instrument as this was, whose Way of Talking would have rather deceived Multitudes than informed them of the Truth, would have led them into the Dark rather than have given them Light, would have filled their Heads with mysterious Words without Ideas, and instead of leading them into the Way of Salvation, would have left them in bewildered Thoughts about the Doctrines and Duties of it with so much Entanglement and Confusion?

Here I might add also, that the holy Apostle not only instructs his own Countrymen the *Jews*, and the *Gentile* Strangers in this divine Doctrine, and teaches them to build their Hopes of Salvation upon it; but *he ventures his own Soul, his immortal Concernments, and his everlasting Hopes upon the same Foundation.* He glories in the Cross of Christ, he has committed his All into his Hands till the great Judgment Day; *he lives by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, faith he, and gave himself for me,* Gal. vi. 14. 2 Tim. i. 12. Gal. ii. 20. 'Tis the Pleasure of his Tongue, 'tis the Joy of his Pen,



Pen, 'tis the Delight and the Life of his Spirit to talk of those Things : He hangs upon this Subject, and knows not how to leave it ; his very Heart and Soul is in it, and he abandons all Things for the Sake of this Knowledge. He despises the former Privileges of his Birth, of his Learning, of the *Jewish* Prerogatives and Rites. He renounces all his Legal and Ceremonial Perfection, and all his Honour amongst the Priests and the Pharisees in Comparison of this. *What Things were Gain to me, says he, those I count Loss for Christ : Yea, doubtless, and I count all Things but Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the Loss of all Things, and do count them but Dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith ; that I may know him and the Power of his Resurrection, and the Fellowship of his Sufferings, being made conformable unto his Death, Philip. iii. 7, &c.*

Nor is the Apostle *Paul* singular in this Respect, or different in his Sentiments from the other Apostles. You find *Peter* and *John* saying the same Things in their Epistles ; and they take every Occasion to publish the same Gospel and the same Promises.

mises and Hopes of Salvation by the Death and Sacrifice of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and by the enlightening and sanctifying Operations of the same *Spirit*. It would be endless to cite all the Proofs of this. Now, 'tis not to be supposed that the three chief Writers among the Apostles should all conspire to talk in the same mysterious and unintelligible Language, so widely different from the common and obvious Sense and Meaning of their Words, if they intended no more by them than the *Socinians* mean by their *Gospel*, which is very little different from the Way of Salvation that the *Deist* proposes, while they deny the *Satisfaction of Christ*, and his real and proper *Atonement for Sin*, and the powerful *sanctifying Influences* of the Holy Spirit.

II. As this Gospel of Christ which we have described, was the Labour of the Apostle's Ministry, and the Design of the Revelation of the New Testament, so 'tis this Gospel which is often hinted and prophesied in the Old Testament also, and typified by the Ceremonies of the *Jewish Religion*. Now these Prophecies could not have been fulfilled, nor these Types answered and accomplished without such a Gospel as I have explained.

The Prophecies of the Old Testament are various and many: Some of the clearest of those which relate to the Sufferings and  
Atone-

Atonement of Christ, and to our Justification by him, are exprest by *Daniel*, *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah*. By *Daniel* we are told that the *Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself*, and the Design of this is to finish Transgression, to make an End of Sin, to make Reconciliation for Iniquities, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness, *Daniel ix. 24, 26.* *Isaiah* speaks the same thing more largely, *Christ was wounded for our Transgressions. He was bruised for our Iniquities. The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed. We like Sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to Grief, and to make his Soul an Offering for Sin. By the Knowledge of him shall he justify many, for he shall bear their Iniquities. How exceeding plain and strong is this Language to support this Doctrine. Isaiah liii. 5, 6, 10, 11. In the Lord shall we have Righteousness and Strength: In the Lord shall all the Seed of Israel be justified and shall glory, Isaiah xlv. 24, 25. And the Prophet *Jeremy* expressly calls *Christ the Lord our Righteousness*, *Jerem. xxiii. 6.**

The Promise of Sanctification by the Spirit of God, is given us in *Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. A new Heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you; I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in*



ESSAY *my Statutes, and ye shall be my People and I*  
 1. *will be your God.*

~ This sort of Language is repeated Chap. xi. 19. and *Jerem.* xxxii. 39, 40. *Jerem.* xxxi. 31, 32, &c. which is cited by the Apostle *Paul* in his Epistles to the *Hebrews*, and to the *Corinthians*, as the Language of the Gospel, or the new Covenant. Now it is manifest enough, that all these Expressions of glorious Grace, and of the Method of our Reconciliation to God, our Sanctification and Salvation could never be answered and accomplished without such a Gospel of *Christ* as we have described.

The Rights and Ceremonies of the *Jewish* Church speak the same thing, if we consider them as Types and Figures of the Gospel-state. I will grant indeed that many of those Ceremonies had also some other Intendments (*viz.*) to distinguish the Nation of *Israel* and their Religion, from the *Gentile* World, and the fantastical Inventions of *Pagan* Worship: To keep them in Subjection to God as their political Head or King: Several of their Sacrifices and Methods of Purification were appointed to cleanse them from ceremonial Defilements, and to atone for Civil or Political Crimes, whereby they were admitted to their Civil Rights again, and their Place in the Congregation, when they had done any thing to forfeit them.

But

But 'tis evident by the Writings of the *Essay* Apostle *Paul*, in 2 *Cor.* Chap. iii. *Gal.* Chap. I. iv. *Coloss.* Chap. ii. *Heb.* Chap. vii, viii, ix, x. that the great End of these *Jewish* ceremonial Appointments was to stand as Types and Figures of things under the Gospel, and Emblems of the various Offices and Benefits of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. Now in this figurative or Emblematical Sense, what did all the Sacrifices and the Blood mean, the burning Beasts and the smoaking Altars, whereby the *Jews* made a typical Atonement for their Sins? What were they Types of, what did they represent, if not the Sacrifice of *Christ*? And what means the sprinkling all the People with the Blood of Animals, if these things did not typify and represent our being cleansed by the Blood of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, which is therefore called the *Blood of sprinkling*, and which is the only real and substantial Atonement for Sin? What meant their laying the Hand upon the Goat that was to bear their Iniquities, and the Confession of the Sins of all *Israel* over his Head, if they did not design to foretel the transferring of the Sins of Men upon the Head of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the Surety and the Sacrifice for Sinners? What did the Washings of Water imply, but the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon sinful Men, and the Purification of their Natures by Divine Grace? Why did that glorious and divine Light dwell in the

ESSAY Tabernacle and in the Temple, and between

I. the *Cherubims* in the Holy of Holies, if it  
 were not an Emblem of the *Fulness of the*  
*Godhead dwelling bodily* in the Man *Christ*  
*Jesus*, in and by whom God was to converse  
 visibly with the Children of Men? Can any Man be so absurd as to believe, in  
 Opposition to so many Expressions of the  
 Apostle in his Letters, that these Sprinklings  
 of Water and of Blood, these bleeding Lambs  
 and burning Goats and Bulls, these Vails,  
 Curtains and Tabernacles served for nothing  
 else but to wrap up the Duties of the Light  
 of Nature in them, and to explain (or rather  
 to darken) the common Truths of natural  
 Religion? And yet the Apostle tells us in several  
 Places, that these were Types or *Figures* of the  
 Gospel of *Christ*. Surely every  
 Shadow bore the Shape and Figure of the  
 Substance: Every Vail and Covering was  
 fitted to the Body. All these were but *Shadows*,  
 but *Christ* is the *Substance* or the *Body*,  
 and the Shape of the Body appeared therein to  
 those that had divine Light to discern it, and  
 especially to us, whom St. *Paul* has taught  
 to understand many of these Mysteries.

Those therefore who impoverish the Gospel  
 of *Christ*, as some Writers have done, and  
 deny those glorious Doctrines that are included  
 in it, they deny that Gospel which was foretold  
 by the Prophets, that Gospel which was hidden  
 in the *Jewish* Shadows,  
 and



and they refuse to see it, though it be now ESSAY  
broken forth into open Light. I.

III. The *Gospel of Christ* must needs be such a Doctrine as we have before described, it must needs be so far superior to all the Dictates of the Light of Nature, and to deserve those glorious Characters which the Apostle frequently gives it, (*viz.*) That it is the *Wisdom of God in a Mystery*, 1 Cor. ii. 7. *The great Mystery of Godliness*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Col. i. 26. *A Mystery hidden from Ages and Generations*, Eph. iii. 3, 5. *The Mystery which in other Ages was not made known unto the Sons of Men*. Rom. xvi. 25. *The Mystery that was kept secret since the World began, hidden in God himself*, Eph. iii. 9. And is hid from the Wise and Prudent of this World, Matt. xi. 25. 'Tis made up of the deep things of God, 1 Cor. 2. ult. And derived from the Depths of his *Wisdom and Knowledge*, Rom. xi. 33. 'Tis the manifold *Wisdom of God, which was made known to Principalities and Powers by the Church*, Eph. iii. 10. *which things the Angels desire to pry into*, 1 Pet. i. 12. *In this he hath abounded toward us in all Wisdom and Prudence*, Eph. i. 8. And it contains the *unsearchable Riches of Christ*, Eph. iii. 8. And *Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*, Col. ii. 3.

Now such sort of Descriptions as these are very applicable to the Doctrine of the *Son of God*, who is also *one with the Father*, and

ESSAY who is *God blessed for evermore*, coming down  
 I. to join himself to Flesh and Blood that he  
 might be able to die in the room and stead  
 of sinful Men, and that this glorious Person,  
 by whom the Worlds were made, and all the  
 Hosts of Men and Angels, Col. i. 15. that  
 he should be made a Sacrifice for our Sins,  
 that God might declare his unspotted Holiness,  
 or Righteousness, his terrible Justice, and  
 his unchangeable hatred of Sin, even while  
 he forgives Sinners, and justifies those that believe  
 in Jesus, Rom. iii. 24, 25. and that this  
 Lord Jesus in human Nature should rise from  
 the Dead, ascend to Heaven, be exalted to  
 the Government of all things visible and invisible,  
 Eph. i. 22, 23. should send his Spirit  
 down to work Faith, Repentance and Holiness  
 in all his chosen and redeemed ones, and  
 carry them through a thousand Temptations  
 and Difficulties, and through Death itself to  
 Heaven and Glory. This is the Doctrine  
 that human Reason could never have found  
 out, and has much ado to be persuaded to  
 receive it now it is manifested in the New  
 Testament. These are Wonders of unsearchable  
 Wisdom, and an Entertainment for prying Angels.

But if the Gospel of *Christ* signify no  
 more than the mere Promise of Pardon to  
 those that Repent of their Sins, and believe  
*Jesus Christ* to be a true Prophet, and follow  
 the Example and Commands of *Christ*,  
 who

who has explained and confirmed the Light of Nature, what is there in this that deserves such a Catalogue of glorious Titles as the Apostle bestows upon this Gospel? There's no such great and deep Contrivance, such astonishing Wisdom in such a Covenant of Grace, as does nothing else but abate the severe and rigid Terms of the Covenant of Works, and make Repentance and imperfect Obedience to serve instead of perfect Obedience, in order to obtain Pardon and Happiness.

I confess there was need of some divine Revelation to assure us that God would accept of our Repentances and our honest Endeavours, when in his Law he demands Perfection. But this any common Prophet might have done, being sent of God and supported by Miracles, as *Elijah* and *Elisha* were. And when once this Doctrine was thus plainly revealed, there would be no great Difficulty to persuade Men to receive it, there are no such sublime Mysteries and Depths of Wisdom and Knowledge contained in it; nor does it need any extraordinary *Genius*, much less Divine Wisdom itself, to have been the Inventor of it.

But far be it from us to have such a diminishing Thought of the glorious *Gospel of Christ*.

IV. Another Reason that I shall give to prove that the *Gospel of Christ* is such a Doctrine as I have before described, is the Opinion



ESSAY nion both of the *Jews and Gentiles* concern-

I. ing it, and the Treatment that it met with  
both in *Judea* and amongst the Nations.

'Twas counted *Foolishness* by the *Greeks*, or the learned *Heathens*, and it was a *Stone of stumbling* to the *Jews*. We preach *Christ crucified* to the *Jews* a *stumbling Block*, and to the *Greeks Foolishness*, 1 Cor. i. 23. Whereas if the Doctrine of *Christ* crucified had implied no more in it than this, that *Jesus* by his Death and Martyrdom on the Cross, bore a Testimony to the Truth of the Doctrine which he preached, and that Doctrine was nothing else but a Discovery of God's Readiness to accept of Sinners that repented and obeyed him, as well as they could, out of his mere Mercy; the *Jews* could never have been so much shocked or offended at it, for they believed as much as this long before *St. Paul* ever preach'd: Nor could the learned *Greeks* have counted that Doctrine *Folly* which the wisest of their Philosophers seemed to understand and teach. This sort of Gospel would have been so little different from what the Light of Nature might lead them probably to expect and hope for, that surely they would not have endeavoured to expose it and ridicule it, but rather they would have fallen in with *St. Paul's* Sermons, as being agreeable to many of their Sentiments. That Gospel therefore which both the *Jews* and the *Greeks* were so much offended with, that  
they

they reproach'd it as Madnefs and Folly, ESSAY  
must be something strange to their Ears, and I.  
exceedingly different from their own Opi-  
nions.

V. I may add also at last, that if St. Paul  
had meant no more by the *Gospel of Christ*  
than this, that God was willing to be recon-  
ciled to Mankind, if they would repent of  
their Sins, and be sorry for them, and liv'd  
as well as they could for Time to come,  
there had been very little Reason for him to  
speak of his Courage in preaching it so often  
as he does, and that with such an *Emphasis*,  
Rom. i. 16. *I am not ashamed of the Gospel  
of Christ, for it is the Power of God unto  
Salvation*; and he repeats it again. 2 Tim. i.  
12. and encourages young Timothy to preach  
the same Gospel, *with Boldness, and not be  
ashamed of Christ*, nor his Ministers. He  
counts it a great thing, that he could glory  
*in the Cross of Christ*, Gal. vi. 14. and in his  
Doctrine of *Christ crucified*, and is resolved  
to spread the Savour of it round the World.  
*I am not ashamed of this Gospel, I am ready  
to preach it among the Jews or the Barba-  
rians, or in the City of Rome itself.* Rom. i.  
15. Now if he had preached nothing but  
the Socinian Gospel, there was nothing in it  
that would have expos'd him to much  
Shame and Reproach for the Hopes of For-  
giveness, upon meer Repentance; and the  
Enforcement of the Duties of Natural Reli-  
gion,

ESSAY gion, with a little Illustration and Advance

I. upon them, was much like the Gospel or Doctrine of the wisest of the *Heathen* Philosophers, that he had almost been esteemed one of those wise Men, and rather treated with Honour amongst them at *Athens*, and in other *Gentile* Cities, and not been reproached as a *setter forth of strange Gods*, and called a *Babbler* for his Preaching of such sort of Doctrines.

But when the Apostle preaches the *Son of God in the Likeness of Man*, that came down from Heaven, not to set up a Throne in the World, and rule personally over the Nations, but to be exposed to Shame and Pain, to be nail'd to a Cross, and have a Crown of Thorns put upon him, and indure all these Sufferings for the Sins of Mankind: When he tells the Heathen World of a Man that was hang'd upon a Tree at *Jerusalem*, and assures them, that his Death is the Foundation and Spring of Eternal Life, to all that believe on him; when he preaches, that the *Lord of Glory was crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 8. that so the worst sort of Sinners might be saved, and *that he who knew no Sin was made a Sacrifice for our Sins, that we might stand Righteous in the Sight of God thro' his Righteousness*, 2 Cor. v. 21. This was something that sounded so strange in the Ears of the *Heathens*, and the blinded *Jews* too, that they multiplied Reproaches upon the Sermons



Sermons and the Preacher. And St. Paul ESSAY thought it a considerable Point gained, when I. he could assume such a Degree of Courage as to be able to say, I dare preach amongst the *Gentiles*, the *Jews*, the *Pharisees* and the *Philosophers* at *Jerusalem*, and at *Rome* such a Gospel as this is; *for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*. This is an Argument which, in my Opinion, carries much Evidence with it, that the *Gospel of Christ* is such a Doctrine as I have before described.

But here is a considerable *Objection* arises against this Description of the Gospel. How can the *Atonement* for Sin by the Death of *Christ* be so considerable a Part of the Gospel, when *Christ* himself, the great Prophet of his Church spoke so seldom and so very little of it during the whole Course of his Ministry. Surely one would think so important a Part of the Christian Doctrine should not have been neglected by *Christ* himself.\*

### S E C T. III.

#### *Answers to Objections.*

Tho' there be a very large and particular Answer given to all the Parts of this Objection in those Sermons; particularly, *Sermon* the 35th, yet since it seems to carry some con-

\* See a large and full Answer to this Objection in Dr. *Watts's* Sermon on the *Atonement of Christ*. Vol. II.

ESSAY considerable Force in it, I would mention

I. some Hints of Reply in this Place.

— I. The great Design of our Saviour in his publick Appearance and Ministry on Earth, was to prove himself to wear the true Characters of the *Messiah*, to deliver the *Jews* from many false Expositions and Glosses which the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* of that Day had given to several Parts of Scripture, to lead the World to a Conviction of their Sins, and thereby prepare them to receive the Doctrine of Salvation with more Zeal and Desire; whereas the Salvation itself, and the Manner whereby it was accomplished, was but briefly mentioned in some few Texts, and the rest was left to be explained by his Apostles.

II. The Doctrine of *Christ's* Atonement for Sin is, indeed, intimated in several Places of his own Ministrations (*viz.*) Matt. xx. 28. *The Son of Man came not to be minister'd unto, but to minister, and give his Life a Ransom for many.* John x. 15. *I lay down my Life for the Sheep.* John vi. 51. *The Bread which I will give is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World.* And when he instituted the Holy Supper, Luke xxii. 19. *He took Bread and brake it, saying, This is my Body which is given for you.* And as in St. Matthew's Gospel, *This Cup is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the Remission of Sins.*

III.

III. This Doctrine of Atonement for Sin ESSAY  
 by his Death, as a Sacrifice, and the Accep- I.  
 tance of it with God the Father, could not  
 be so well preached in Publick, before those  
 very Facts were fulfilled, upon which this  
 Doctrine is founded; for his Death was the  
 the Foundation of this Atonement; his Re-  
 surrection and Ascension to Heaven, were  
 the Proofs of its being accepted with God:  
 Now it might have appear'd preposterous to  
 our Saviour, who was divinely wise, to  
 preach these Doctrines freely in Publick to  
 the Multitude, before these Events appear'd  
 in the World.

And even to his own Disciples he was not  
 too free in the Communication of them, be-  
 cause, as *John xvi. 12.* He told them, *he had*  
*many Things to teach them, but they could not*  
*bear them yet:* It might have been the Means  
 of raising some Prejudices in the Minds of  
 his own Disciples; whereas he reserved some  
 of these Things to be taught in those forty  
 Days, while he continued with them after  
 his Resurrection, and *spake with them of the*  
*Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.*  
*Acts i. 3.*

And thence we may infer, that if we  
 would learn the plainest and fullest Account  
 of the Gospel of *Christ*, 'tis not enough for  
 us to consult merely his publick Sermons, or  
 the Histories of his Life, which are called  
 the Four Gospels, but we must read care-  
 fully



ESSAY fully the Writings of the Apostles, after he

I. went to Heaven; in which they taught these Doctrines more compleatly, which they had learnt from the Converse of *Christ*, after his Resurrection, as well as by the pouring out of his own Spirit upon them in great Abundance, as he had promised.

But there is another *Objection*, which is borrowed from the *Socinian* Writings, which it may be proper to give some Reply to (*viz.*) *That it does not agree to the moral Perfections of God to punish Sin in a Surety; nor does it become the great God who is a Being of infinite Wisdom and Goodness and Equity, to appoint such a Way of Salvation for Men, as would necessitate an innocent Creature to be exposed to so many sharp Sufferings as Christ underwent, while the guilty Sinner suffers nothing of all these Terrors, but is deliver'd from the severest of them by the Death of Christ.*

In Answer to this, I desire it may be consider'd, that this Doctrine of the Expiation and Atonement for Sin by *Christ*, is so plainly and expressly revealed and declared in the New Testament, by the Apostles *Paul*, *Peter*, and *John*, as has been already shewn, and is so frequently repeated in many Forms of Speech in the Sacred Writings, that it seems a very bold Imagination to suppose, that that could not be agreeable to the moral Perfections of God, or that it could not become

come God to appoint that, which in so many **ESSAY** repeated Scriptures, is expressly asserted to be **I.** done by *Jesus Christ*, and by the Appointment of the Father. Can it be ever imagined, that the Great God did not know what would become every one of his Perfections better than we little Insects, just crept out of the Earth, and returning thither again, could teach him? Can it be ever thought, that the Eternal Mind did not know what was decent for a just and a wise God to do, better than we can conceive or suggest?

I answer, in the second Place, that some of the very Expressions wherein this Doctrine is represented in Scripture are such as seem to be designed on purpose to obviate this very Objection, particularly 2 Cor. v. 21. *God has made him to be Sin for us who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him*, i. e. he made him to be a Sacrifice for Sin for us, that we might be deliver'd from the Guilt of Sin, and accepted as righteous in the Sight of God. Again, 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Christ also hath once suffer'd for Sins, the Just for the Unjust*, that he might bring us to God. Again, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22. *Christ suffer'd for us, who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth, who his own self bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree.* Again, 1 John ii. 1, 2. *Jesus Christ the Righteous: He is the Propitiation for our Sins.* Thus you see all these Texts declare expressly

ESSAY expressly the Innocence of *Jesus Christ* who  
 I. suffer'd, and the Iniquities of those for whom  
 he suffer'd : It is evident enough that a righteous Person died for the Guilty, and the Guilty were saved.

*Ans. III.* Let it be yet further consider'd, that the Man *Christ Jesus*, who had a natural *Will* which was distinct from the supreme *Will* of the Godhead, gave up himself to those Sufferings, and consented to it fully, *Heb. x. 5, — 10. In Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices of Beasts thou hadst no Pleasure; but a Body hast thou prepared me: Then I said, Lo, I come to do thy Will, O God.* He had a Right given him by the Father to lay down his Life, and a Right to take it up again. *John x. 18.* And he had an additional *Exaltation* promised him on this Account, *Heb. xii. 2.* and actually bestow'd on him for this Service: *Phil. ii. 9. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him,* besides several other Events in the Divine Scheme of God's Government, for the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Men. All which are sufficient to make the Sufferings of *Christ* very consistent with the Equity and Justice of God, tho' the innocent Creature suffer'd and the Guilty was set free. So that I see no manner of inconsistency between this Transaction, and any of God's Moral Perfections; and therefore I can see nothing in it which was unbecom-



becoming for God to appoint, or for *Christ* ESSAY  
to submit to. I.

To confirm this, let it be remembred, that it is expressly said, *Heb. ii. 10.* *It became him for whom are all Things, and by whom are all Things, in bringing many Sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect thro' Sufferings, τελειῶσαι,* which signifies to consecrate *Jesus Christ* to be an High-Priest by this Blood of Atonement, which Dr. *Whitby* proves at large in his Comment on this Text.

Nor is it all strange, that those who borrow from the *Socinian* \* Writers may raise such

\* At the Time when this Essay was written, it was the common Custom of Writers to denominate Parties of Men, by the Name which belonged to one of the chief Leaders of that Party, as Dr. *Whitby* speaks of the *Socinians*, the *Arians*, and *others*, in the same manner.

This Practice is not quite so Customary now-a-days, because the same Errors are not always join'd in the same Person, and therefore it may be proper to describe Opinions, Errors or Parties in general by such Names, but not particular Persons. As for Instance: The *Socinians* in the last Age, generally believed *Christ* to be a mere *Man*, and deny'd his Satisfaction or proper Atonement for Sin; whereas in the present Age, most Followers of that Party believe *Jesus Christ* to be as glorious a Person as the *Arians* make him (*viz.*) more ancient than any of the Works of God, and his Agent in creating the World, and at the same time they deny his proper Atonement for Sin.

You

D

ESSAY such Objections against the Atonement or Sa-

I. tisfaction of *Christ* for Sin: Since *Socinus* himself saith, *Should there be found some Places of Scripture, where it should be expressly written, that God was made Man, or did assume human Flesh; they should not presently be taken according as the Words sound, since that is altogether repugnant to the Divine Majesty. So Socinus in his Disputations of Jesus Christ. And again: If not once only, but often it should be written in the sacred Scriptures, that Christ made Satisfaction to God for Sins; I would not therefore believe, that the Matter is so as you imagine. So Socinus on the Satisfaction. And again: Any, even the greatest Force is to be used with Words, rather than take them in the obvious Sense. So his Second Epistle to Balcerimicius.*

You see then a plain Reason why Errors may have the Names of their Leaders apply'd to them; but 'tis not proper to give the same Denomination to all those particular Persons who hold some of their Errors, but who deny the others.

ESSAY

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## ESSAY II.

### *The FORM of the GOSPEL.*

An Enquiry, *Whether it be a New Law with Commands, Threatnings and Conditions in it? and, Whether the Duties of the Gospel are our justifying Righteousness?*

A RECONCILING DISCOURSE.

#### SECT. I.

*Is the Gospel a Conditional Promise?*

THE general Nature and Substance of the Gospel is agreed on all Hands to be a *Discovery of Divine Grace to sinful Man thro' a Mediator*: But several Parties of Christians have raised endless Debates about the particular *Form* of it (*viz.*) Whether it be a mere absolute Promise, or a Conditional Covenant: Whether it contain in it Commands and Threatnings or no: Or whether it be a New Law.

It is my Opinion concerning many of the Debates about our Religion, that they may be sufficiently determined for the Peace and Practice of Christians, by finding out the va-



ESSAYRIOUS Use of Words in common Language,  
 II. and especially the Sense of them in the holy  
 ~~~~~ Scriptures, and submitting our Judgments  
 and Consciences to this Sense of them, with  
 a little reconciling Explication. And this  
 noisy Controversy may, perhaps, come nearer  
 to a Decision, if we will but honestly con-  
 sult the Ways of speaking, that the Scrip-  
 ture useth in solving these three following  
*Questions.*

But before I propose them, I would beg  
 one Favour of my Readers, and that is, as  
 they run over these Pages, they would so far  
 deny themselves of a common Custom, as  
 not to examine and judge of this little *Essay*  
 by any Systems of Orthodoxy in their Closet,  
 or in their Head, but by the only System,  
 out of which I have drawn it, the Holy Bi-  
 ble; for in the whole Composure of this  
 Discourse, I have not consulted one Author  
 besides; and I would chuse to be read just  
 in the same way in which I write, and to  
 be judged by the same Rule. I proceed now  
 to name the three following *Questions.*

#### QUESTION I.

*Whether the Gospel be an Absolute or a Condi-  
 tional Promise?*

*Ans.* The Gospel in its most general Sense  
 may be described as a Declaration of the  
 free

free Mercy of God, for the Salvation of fallen Man by a Mediator. ESSAY II.

As Man by his Fall hath lost the Image of God and his Favour, Salvation includes the Recovery of both these : It implies therefore Repentance, Regeneration, Holiness and Perseverance, as well as Justification, Adoption and Glorification ; we must be saved from our Sins, as well as from the Wrath of God, if we are made truly happy. *Jesus the Mediator saves his People from their Sins. Matt. i. 21. as well as delivers from the Wrath to come. 1 Thel. i. ult.*

These several Blessings included in Salvation, tho' they are all bestowed freely by Grace, yet have a Connexion one with another, and Dependence on each other ; therefore some of them are represented as foregoing, others as following ; some as Means, the others as the End. Faith, Repentance, Regeneration, Pardon, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Obedience, the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, and Perseverance, may all be esteemed as Means, with regard to the great and final Blessing of Glorification, which is the End ; and indeed, every foregoing Blessing may be reckoned in some Sense, as a Means with regard to that which follows.

Again, some of the Blessings included in Salvation, are to be wrought in us, as Repentance, Sanctification, &c. Others to be

ESSAY only bestowed upon us, as Pardon of Sin,

II. Adoption, Eternal Glory, &c. Those that

are to be wrought in us, are sometimes set forth in Scripture, as Duties to be performed by us, to stir us up in a rational way to seek them; and those that are only to be bestow'd upon us, are set forth as Blessings to be confer'd in consequence upon such Duties performed; for God will save us still as intellectual Creatures, under a moral Government, and will have our rational Powers used in obtaining and possessing this Salvation; and therefore it is sometimes set forth as a proposed Agreement between two intelligent Beings, God and Man, and is called the *New Covenant*, a *better Covenant*, and the *Word of Reconciliation*. Heb. viii. 8. and viii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 19.

Upon these Considerations the Gospel or Covenant of Grace is sometimes represented as a mere Declaration of Grace, or an absolute Promise in Scripture, and sometimes as a conditional one. It is represented *Absolutely* in these Texts, Gal. iii. 8. *The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all Nations be blessed.* Heb. x. 16, 17. *This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those Days, saith the Lord; I will put my Laws into their Hearts, and in their Minds will I write them: And their Sins and Iniquities*



quities will I remember no more. Though *ESSAY* the Word *Covenant* does usually signify an II. Engagement on both sides, yet 'tis sufficiently evident, that in the Language of Scripture it does not always imply Restipulation or mutual Agreement; for 'tis apply'd to the Day and the Night, and their stated Courses, to the Beasts of the Field, as Inhabitants of this Earth, *Jer.* xxxiii. 20, 25. *Gen.* ix. 9, 10.

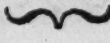
All the Blessings of the Gospel, both the Means and the End, are represented in a way of free or absolute Donation by the Apostle *Paul* frequently. So *Eph.* ii. 8, 9. *By Grace ye are saved through Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God, not of Works,——for we are his workmanship, &c.* In other places of Scripture the Gospel is represented in a *Conditional* way, as *Mark* xvi. 15, 16. *Preach the Gospel to every Creature, he that believeth shall be saved.* *Matt.* xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest,* *John* vii. 37. *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink,* *1 John* i. 9. *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, &c.* These are properly called *conditional* Propositions in a logical or rational View of the Relations of things.

And it may be observed, that those very parts of our Salvation which in one Scripture are commanded as *Duties*, in another are promised as *Blessings*. So Faith and Repen-

ESSAY tance are *Duties* required. *Mark* i. 15. *Repent and believe the Gospel*: They are *Blessings* bestowed, *Phil.* i. 29. *To you it is given to believe*, *Acts* v. 3. *God hath exalted him—to give Repentance*: And it is easy to bring Instances of the like nature concerning several other parts of our Salvation.

Now according to the Distinctions I have laid down, the foregoing Blessings which are as Means, may be esteemed *Conditions* with regard to others which are as the End of them: So Justification and Adoption, as well as Faith and Repentance, and Perseverance, all which are as Means, may be called *Conditions* in regard of Glorification which is the last End. In that golden Chain of Salvation, *Rom.* viii. 30. Calling, Justification, and Glorification are three great Links. *Whom he called, them he also justified: And whom he justified, them he also glorified.* But all agree if we are not called, we shall not be justified: If we are not justified, we shall not be glorified. Thus every Blessing of Salvation that in the necessary order of Nature follows another, may be said to be suspended on that other, as a *Condition* without which it shall not be bestowed.

Again, those Blessings that are represented as our *Duties*, and are to be wrought in us, may be said to be *Conditions* with regard to consequent Blessings that are only conferred upon us: (for the word *Condition*, in its most common

common Sense, does by no means imply **ESSAY** that it must be performed by our own Power, **II.** nor does it include any thing of a valuable  Consideration or Merit in it.) And therefore in this Sense, Faith may be called a *Condition of Justification*, because Faith and Justification are connected together in Scripture, and Faith is represented as a foregoing Blessing, and as a Duty, Justification as a consequent Blessing, and a Privilege which is suspended upon it. Gal. ii. 16. *Knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified.* So the Use of Water is a Condition of being made clean, so coming to the Fire is a Condition of being warmed, so the putting on a Garment is a Condition of being clothed, receiving a sealed Pardon is the Condition of a Prisoner's Release, committing the Body to a Physician is the Condition of a sick or dying Man's being healed: And in this Sense Faith is called a Condition of our Interest in *Christ*, by the Assembly of Divines in their larger Catechism under the *Question, How is the Grace of God manifested in the second Covenant?* " *Answ.* The Grace of God is manifested in the second Covenant, in that " he freely provideth and offereth to Sinners " a Mediator, and Life and Salvation by " him, and requiring *Faith* as the *Condi-* " *tion* to interest them in him, promiseth

I

and



ESSAY “ and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his Elect,  
 II. “ to work in them that Faith with all other  
 ~~~~~ “ saving Graces, and to enable them unto  
 “ all holy Obedience, as the Evidence of the  
 “ Truth of their Faith and Thankfulness to  
 “ God, and as the way which he hath ap-  
 “ pointed to Salvation.”

Nor can I see any sufficient Reason why the Grace of *Faith*, as a *Blessing* conferr'd, may be called the Condition of a following Blessing, and yet Faith, consider'd as a Duty, may not be called a Condition of the same Blessing, since both the Habit and the Act of Faith are the Effects of Divine Grace working in us and by us; and where Faith is propos'd as a Duty, it is represented more evidently in a conditional way than where 'tis mentioned as a mere Blessing.

And upon the same account, Holiness and Perseverance may be called the Conditions of our compleat Salvation in Heaven, because Holiness and Perseverance are foregoing Blessings and Duties, and compleat Salvation in Heaven is the final Privilege, *Heb. xii. 14. Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* *Matt. xxiv. 13. He that endures to the End shall be saved.* Nor doth Dr. Owen, nor other moderate Writers in this Controversy, refuse the use of the word *Condition* in such a Sense.

What I have said concerning the various Blessings of the Gospel or new Covenant, may be apply'd also to the Seals or Symbols of it,

*Baptism*

*Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*. These are ESSAY  
 Seals on God's part, which he hath appointed II.  
 for the Confirmation of our Faith, by the ~  
 Help of our Senses, and that he might give  
 us, as it were, a real Pledge of the Perfor-  
 mance of his Promises. Thus Abraham re-  
 ceived *Circumcision* a Seal of the *Righteousness*  
 of Faith, Rom. iv. 11. Thus we receive X  
 Baptism as a Seal of our Regeneration by the  
 Holy Spirit: Thus the Lord's Supper as a  
 Seal of our Pardon and Life by the Cruci-  
 fixation and Death of *Christ*. But as great  
 Privileges as they are, thus granted to us, we  
 must remember they are also Duties to be  
 performed by us, and are Seals on our part  
 of our Engagement to be the Lord's. Nor  
 have we any Reason to expect the Comforts  
 that arise from these sealed Blessings of the  
 Gospel if we wilfully despise and neglect the  
 use of the Seals: And in this Sense they may  
 be called Conditions of the Privileges, and  
 Comforts that are annexed to them.

I desire it here to be noted, that I speak  
 not this to encourage and promote the com-  
 mon use of the word *Condition* in these Cases;  
 for it is not used in Scripture, except once in  
 a Parable; and that not in the Original, but  
 only in our Translation. The Text is *Luke*  
*xiv. 33.* where 'tis not at all to the purpose  
 of the present Controversy: The Conditions  
 there mentioned are not the Conditions of our  
 Salvation, but quite another thing: The De-  
 sign

ESSAY sign of the Parable is to shew that those who  
 II. have not Courage to fight with their spiri-  
 ~~~~~tual Enemies, the World, the Flesh, and the  
 Devil, must e'en make *Conditions of Peace*  
*with them*, that is, sit still and neglect *Christ*  
 and Religion.

Besides the Word *Condition*, (though it be  
 an innocent and an useful and expressive  
 Word in the matter of Duty and Privilege)  
 yet it hath been ill explained by some Preach-  
 ers, and worse understood by some Hearers,  
 and thereby it hath given great Offence: I  
 say this therefore only to shew that there is  
 not so much Heresy and Poison in those four  
 Syllables as some learned Men pretend, and  
 some unlearned believe and fear. If any  
 Man will fix such a rigid Sense on the word  
*Condition* as is inconsistent with the Grace of  
 the Gospel, and then say, the Gospel has  
 no Conditions in it, I will not contend with  
 him; for he speaks consistently with himself,  
 and with Scripture too; because Scripture  
 does not use the Word: But if *Condition* be  
 taken in a very plain and common Sense for  
*any one thing upon which another is suspended*, I  
 do not know any Scripture that forbids the  
 use of it, but such Texts as these, 1 Cor. x.  
 32. *Give no Offence to—the Church of God.*  
 Rom. xv. 2. *Please your Neighbour for his*  
*Good to Edification.*

S E C T.



S E C T. II.

Quest. *Is the Gospel a new Law?*

*Whether Commands and Threatnings belong to the Gospel?*

Ans<sup>r</sup>. The word Gospel or εὐαγγέλιον, though it signifies *Glad Tidings* in its original Derivation, yet it is used in Scripture sometimes in a larger Sense, as well as sometimes in a more proper and limited one.

When 'tis used in its proper and limited Sense it denotes a mere Declaration of the good Will of God for the Recovery of fallen Man: So the Texts before cited *Gal. iii. 8. Heb. x. 16, 17. And so 2 Cor. v. 19.* where the Gospel is called *the Word of Reconciliation*, the Substance of it is, that *God was in Christ, reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespases to them.* So the first Gospel that ever was preached to *Adam*, after the Fall, was a free Discovery of Mercy, *Gen. iii. 15. The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head.*

When the Word Gospel is used in its larger Sense, it includes Predictions, Commands, Promises, Threatnings, Histories, Examples, and almost whatever is necessary to enforce those Duties upon the Consciences of Men, which are as Means appointed, in order to partake of the Privileges.

So the Gospel contains in it Narratives of Matters of Fact, or Histories, *Mark i. 1.*

*The*

ESSAY *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,*  
 II. which seems to refer to all the following History of his Life and Death; and the four Histories of the Evangelists are called *Gospels*, which Title (if not Divine originally, yet) has been the Language of the Church, thro' so many Ages of Christianity.

The Word *Gospel* contains, also, some *Doctrines*, Col. i. 5. *The Hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof ye heard before in the Word of Truth of the Gospel.* The Gospel reveals Truths before unknown to Men. So *Life and Immortality are brought to Light by the Gospel*, 2 Tim. i. 10. i. e. *Doctrines of the heavenly State.*

*Commands.* 2 Cor. ix. 13. *By the Experiment of this Ministration they glorify God for your professed Subjection to the Gospel of Christ.* This Subjection to the Gospel, implies, that *Liberality* is commanded in it. *Acts* xvi. 21. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.* This is the Command given to the convinced Jailor.

*Promises and Threatnings,* Mark xvi. 16. *Preach the Gospel to every Creature; he that believeth and is baptiz'd shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.*

*Predictions,* particularly of the final Judgment. Rom. ii. 16. *God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.* That is, according as I have preached.

It

It is plain, that sometimes the *Gospel* is said ESSAY  
to be the Object of Belief, as Mark i. 15. II.  
*Believe the Gospel*; and there it signifies a  
Declaration of Grace to Sinners. Sometimes  
it is said to be the Object of Obedience.  
Rom. x. 16. *All have not obeyed the Gospel*:  
there it must include Duties and Com-  
mands.

It is also evident, that in many Places of  
the New-Testament, the *Gospel* is used to  
signify the whole Ministry of the Apostles,  
and all the Subjects of their preaching, as  
Rom. i. 9. *Whom I serve in the Gospel*. 1 Cor.  
ix. 14. *They that preach the Gospel should live  
of the Gospel*, (*viz.*) be maintained, not mere-  
ly for preaching a Promise, but for the whole  
of their Ministration; and therefore the A-  
postle sometimes calls it *my Gospel*, and *our  
Gospel*, to signify his whole Ministry.

Nor do I think there is any great Diffe-  
rence, whether we include Commands,  
Threatnings, &c. in the Word *Gospel*, taken  
in a large Sense, or call them Appendices and  
Attendants of the *Gospel*, taking the Word in  
a Sense more proper and limited: For the  
Language of Scripture seems to favour the  
one as well as the other.

But this is the Mischief that ariseth be-  
tween Christians that differ in their Senti-  
ments or Expression of Things, they ima-  
gine that while one is true, the other must  
needs be false; and then they brand each  
other



ESSAY other with Error and Heresy; whereas if

II. they would but attend to Scripture, that  
 ~~~~~ would shew them to be both in the Right, by  
 its different Explication of their own Forms  
 of speaking. The *Gospel* hath, or hath not  
*Commands* and *Conditions* in it, according to  
 the various Senses in which 'tis used.

And in this way of Reconciliation I cannot but hope for some Success, because it falls in with the universal fond Esteem that each Man hath of his own Understanding; it proves that two warm Disputers may both have Truth on their Side: Now if ten Persons differ in their Sentiments, it is much easier to persuade all of them that they may be all in the Right, than it is to convince one that he is in the wrong.

#### QUESTION.

*Whether the Gospel be a New Law?*

*Ans.* A *Law* in the proper and full Meaning of the Word, includes these three Things in it.

I. That there be some Command given out, wherein some Duty is required, or Sin forbidden by the just Authority of a Superior.

II. That there be a Sanction, or Penalty annexed to the Neglect of that Duty required, or the Commission of that Sin forbidden: This Sanction is not always express'd

press'd, but it is always imply'd; for the Authority that is sufficient to impose a Command on any Person, must also be sufficient to punish the Breach of this Command, and the Offender is liable to bear it; otherwise the Command would be a mere Advice, and not a Law. ESSAY II.

III. That the Performance of this Duty or Duties required, and Abstinence from these Sins forbidden, is our proper Righteousness, or Matter upon which we are justified in the Court of this Law.

These three Things are imply'd in every strict and proper *Law*: And I might prove it by Instances of the chief Laws that Scripture speaks of (*viz.*) The Law of Innocency, the Law of Nature, and the *Jewish* Law.

Thus it was in the *Law of Innocency* or Covenant of Works with *Adam*; the Duties required, were all that the Light of Nature and Reason enjoin'd to *Adam* in such Circumstances, to which there was one positive Prohibition added, *Thou shalt not eat of the Tree of Knowledge*, &c. and the Sanction and Penalty is express'd; *In the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, Gen. ii. 17. and *Adam's* Observance of this Law would have been his Righteousness in the Sight of God, and justified him before God, according to the general Language of this, and all Laws. *The Man that doth them shall live in them*, Gal. iii. 12. And 'tis ge-

E

nerally

ESSAY nerally agreed, that the Tree of Life was a  
 II. Symbol or Seal of Immortal Life to Adam,  
 if he obeyed the Law.

Thus it was also in the *Law of Nature*, or moral Law, which is very little different from the Law of Innocency, and this Law is plainly described by the Apostle, *Rom. ii. 12, 13, 14, 15. The Work of the Law is written in the Hearts of the Heathens, i.e.* The general Commands and Penalties may be found by the Light of Nature, and *the Doers of this Law shall be justified.* Not that St. Paul means, that any Person shall actually be justified by his Doing, but that this is the way of Justification, according to the Law of Nature.

Thus it was, also, in the *Jewish Law* or *Sinai Covenant*, which was not the Gospel, but an additional Constitution, relating only to the *Jewish Nation*, to be govern'd by God as their peculiar King. And it was really distinct from the Covenant of Grace or Gospel of Salvation, whereby *Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the Israelites* themselves were to be saved. Some Persons, indeed, call it a legal Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace (with whom I will not contend) but it is more agreeable to the Language of Scripture, to call it a distinct Covenant, or a Covenant or Law of Works; as a *Jewish Appendix* to the Gospel.

It



It is true, indeed, the *Jewish* Law had *ESSAY*  
much of Grace in it as well as much of II.  
Terror, and in many Parts of it, it repre-  
sented, typify'd, witness'd and held forth  
the Gospel or Covenant of Grace, whereby  
all Believers in all Ages are to be saved, as  
well as the original Law of Nature, or the  
general Covenant of Works, whereby all  
Men are cursed and condemn'd; and the A-  
postle makes use of it in all these Views in  
his Epistles to the *Romans*, *Galatians* and  
*Hebrews*: But the *Jewish* Law in its own  
proper Nature and Design, was a special or  
particular Covenant of Works with temporal  
Promises and temporal Threatnings.

The *Duties* enjoin'd were chiefly con-  
tained in the four last Books of *Moses*, and  
commonly called the *Moral*, the *Ceremonial*,  
and the *Judicial* or *Political* Law: The  
*Sanction* is written in many Parts of those  
Books; some of the Threatnings or Penal-  
ties were to be inflicted on particular Of-  
fenders by the Magistrate, such as, beating  
with Rods, stoning to Death, Fines and A-  
mercements of Money or Goods, &c. Some  
were to be inflicted on the whole Nation by  
God himself, if they transgressed this Law,  
such as Plagues, Famine, Banishment from  
the Land of *Canaan*, &c. *Deut. xxviii.* and  
the justifying Righteousness according to this  
Law, was their Obedience to the Precepts  
and Ordinances of it. *Deut. vi. 25. And it*

ESSAY shall be our Righteousness if we observe to do

II. all these Commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us. So Deut. xxiv. 13. so Rom. x. 5. Moses describeth the Righteousness which is of the Law, That the Man which doth those Things shall live by them.

Now let us consider how far the Gospel partakes of the Nature of a Law, and may be so called.

I. The Gospel taken in a large Sense, hath so much of the Nature of a Law in it, that there are Commands given, Duties enjoin'd, Sins forbidden; and it hath a Sanction also, for there are terrible Penalties annexed to the Contempt or Rejection of it, even a much sorer Punishment than was threaten'd for the Breach of the Law of Moses, Heb. x. 28, 29. And because it partakes so much of the Nature of a Law, and hath such Resemblance to it, it is in a few Places of Scripture called a Law, without Dispute. Isa. ii. 3. *The Law shall go forth from Zion.* Rom. iii. 27. *The Law of Faith.*

II. The Gospel is not a Law in the full Sense of the Word, for it wants the third requisite of a Law. Whatsoever Duties are required in the Gospel, the Performance of those Duties by us is not described in Scripture as the Matter of our Righteousness before God. There are many Blessings promised, and Blessednesses pronounced in the Gospel

Gospel upon the Discharge of various Du-ESSAY  
ties of Holiness, which are prescribed in II.  
the New Testament; but in the Court of  
God and his Word, a Sinner is not justified  
by any, or all these Duties. Faith itself,  
which is the first and great Requirement of  
the Gospel, is not our justifying Righteous-  
ness, but is the Way and Means to obtain,  
or be possessed of a Justifying Righteous-  
ness. The Righteousness by which we are  
justified under the Gospel doth not use to be  
represented as a Righteousness wrought in  
us, or by us, or as a Righteousness of Works,  
or a Righteousness of Man; but it is men-  
tioned as a Righteousness from without us,  
a *given Righteousness*, Rom. v. 27. *a Righteousness imputed without Works*, Rom. iv. 6.  
And it is commonly called by St. Paul, *the Righteousness of God*; it is a Rectitude in  
the Court of God including or inferring an  
Absolution from Guilt, and a Right to  
Heaven appointed, prepared and bestowed  
by God himself upon all them that believe;  
and it is received by our Faith or trusting in  
*Christ. The Righteousness of God is by the Faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe*, Rom. iii. 22. And it is  
called *the Gift of Righteousness*, in Rom. v. 17. as a very distinct Thing from the *Gift of Faith*. Eph. ii. 8.

And here we may do well to take Notice  
that tho' there are a great many Differences



ESSAY between the Gospel, which St. Paul preach-

II. ed, and the Jewish Law, such as the Multitude of arbitrary Commands in the natural and civil Life, the Burden of many Ceremonies, the Temporal Promises and Threatnings, &c. yet the grand Point of Difference, which he frequently insisted on, is the different way of Justification (*viz.*) That the one is by Works, the other not. (Always remembering that before God as the great Lord of Conscience, and with Regard to eternal Life, the Jews were to be justify'd and sav'd by the same Gospel, and by Faith, even as Abraham of old, and Christians now. But with regard to God, considered as their Political Governor or King by the Sinai Covenant, they were to be justified by Works.) The Blessed Apostle therefore treating accurately of these Matters ever distinguishes the Gospel from the Law, whether it be the Law of Nature, the Law of Innocency, the Jewish Law, and indeed, from every thing that hath the full Nature and Form of a Law, by this particular Mark (*viz.*) that our Obedience to the Law would be our justifying Righteousness if we perform'd it; but Obedience to the Gospel is not our Justifying Righteousness. So Rom. 2d and 3d Chap.\*

The

\* See this more enlarged and explain'd in the Harmony of all Religions Chap. v. and vi.

The Jewish Law (consider'd as a special Covenant, or as it includes or represents the general Law of Nature) says, *Peace to every Man that worketh Good, to the Jew, and the Gentile: and the Doers of the Law shall be justified*; Rom. ii. 10, 13. But the Righteousness of God, i. e. that Righteousness whereby we are justified according to the Gospel, is a Righteousness without the Law, a different thing from a Law-Righteousness, and is now manifested by the Gospel, and comes upon every Believer, Rom. iii. 21, 22, &c. So Rom. x. 5, 6. The Righteousness of the Law saith, *The Man that doth those things shall live by them*: But the Righteousness of Faith saith, v. 9. *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe with thy Heart—thou shalt be saved*. So Gal. iii. 11, 12, &c. The Law is not of Faith, for this very Reason, because the Law says, *Do this and live, or Obey and be justified*. But the Gospel saith, *The Just shall live by Faith. Believe and thou shalt be saved*. And in the following Verses, the Gospel is represented under the Term and Title of a Promise to distinguish it more evidently from a Law: for if there had been a Law which could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law. Gal. iii. 21. But Scripture hath concluded all under Sin, that the Promise by the Faith of Jesus Christ might be given to

ESSAY *them that believe.* This is the common  
 II. Language of Scripture.

And therefore instead of representing the several Duties injoin'd in the Gospel, as the Matter of our Righteousness before God, the New Testament sends us expressly to *Jesus Christ* for Righteousness. So St. Paul tells us, Rom. iii. 2, 5. *Christ is set forth as a Propitiation—that God might justify them that believe, and yet be a just and righteous God,* Rom. v. 17, 18, 19. *They that receive—the Gift of Righteousness shall reign in Life by one Jesus Christ.—So by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life.—by the Obedience of one, i. e. Christ, shall many be made righteous.* God will have a Righteousness in his Gospel whereby Grace shall reign to eternal Life, Rom. v. ult. though 'tis not a Righteousness of our own Works, as the Objection in the very next Verse, Rom. vi. 1. evidently proves, and so Rom. x. 3. *Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to all that believe,* 1 Cor. i. 30. *Christ is made of God Righteousness to us;* and 2 Cor. v. 20, &c. where the Gospel is particularly described as the *Word of Reconciliation*, we are told that *Christ was made Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him,* and this Righteousness is expressly called the *Righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ,* 2 Pet. i. 1. because it is



the immediate Result of his Obedience and Death. And it is upon this account in the old Testament, he is more than once called *the Lord our Righteousness*. But when I explain in what Sense *Christ* is our Righteousness, I would take more time and room, lest if I should not keep exactly to the common Forms of Expression, I should want a larger Vindication.

Now though our Obedience to the first and great Command of the Gospel (*viz.*) *Believing in Christ*, is not our Righteousness, (lest it exclude *Christ* and the Righteousness of God) yet it is the way of our partaking of this Righteousness; and therefore our Justification or Justifying Righteousness is so often called *the Righteousness of God by Faith*, and *the Righteousness of Faith*; ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη. Rom. ix. 30. Rom. x. 6. δικαιοσύνη διὰ πίστεως, and ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει. Phil. iii. 9. all which are more properly rendered, *The Righteousness that is by or through Faith*, or, *that comes upon our believing*. In other Places 'tis express'd, that we are *justified by Faith*; but still in Opposition to the Works of any true and proper Law. And it is in this Sense that *Faith* is said to be *imputed* or *accounted for Righteousness*. Rom. iv. 5. it is not said, *Faith* is our Righteousness, or instead of a perfect Righteousness, but λογίζεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην, i. e. in order to our Justification; meaning, that of all the Graces wrought

ESSAY wrought in us, or Actions done by us, Faith  
 II. is the only thing that God *makes account of*  
 or reckons to our Advantage, in order to our  
*Justification*, or our obtaining a justifying  
 Righteousness; and that not as a Work or  
 Duty performed; as is proved by the Con-  
 text, but chiefly for this very Reason, be-  
 cause it renounceth every thing of Works,  
 and goes out of Self to depend intirely on  
 Grace, which is the Design of all that 4th  
 Chapter, by a parallel Instance of *Abraham's*  
 not depending on his own Sufficiency of Na-  
 ture, but on God's Power to fulfil the  
 Promise.

Nor is this Exposition of the Words *ἐκ  
 δικαιοσύνης* forced or strange, for they are  
 used exactly in the same Sense in other places,  
 even when 'tis joined with *πίστεως*, Rom. x. 10.  
*With the Heart Man believeth unto Righteous-*  
*ness*, i. e. in order to his obtaining a justifying  
 Righteousness, or in order to Justification;  
 so v. 4. *Christ is the End of the Law for*  
*Righteousness to every one who believeth.*

This Account of things gives a plain Rea-  
 son why the Gospel justifies and accepts  
 those Persons who perform an honest and  
 sincere, but a very poor, inconstant and im-  
 perfect Obedience to the Commands con-  
 tained in it, although those Duties are there  
 commanded in Perfection, (*viz.*) because  
 it is not our Obedience to those Commands  
 that is the justifying Righteousness of the  
 Gospel,

Gospel, but another Righteousness that is *Essay I*  
 given us, *v. l.* a Freedom from Guilt, and *III*  
 a Right to Life, when we obey the first  
 great Command (*viz.*) *Believing or trusting*  
*in Christ.*

Whereas a proper Law requires perfect  
 Obedience for Justification: The Language  
 of every proper Law is this; *Cursed or con-*  
*demned is every one that continueth not in*  
*all things that are written in the Book of*  
*the Law to do them,* Gal. iii. 10. and *Who-*  
*soever shall keep the whole Law, and yet of-*  
*fend in one Point, he is guilty of all.* James  
 ii. 10. That can be no justifying Righte-  
 ousness according to a Law which doth not  
 arise to the Perfection of the Command,  
 both for Kind, for Degree, for Continu-  
 ance, and for every Circumstance. But the  
 Gospel proposing another justifying Righte-  
 ousness to be received only by our Faith;  
 whether this Faith be strong and perfect or  
 no, yet (if it be true) it receives the  
 Righteousness, and the Believer is justified.  
 If a Criminal lay hold on a Pardon with a  
 trembling paralytick Hand, he is as safe from  
 Condemnation, as he that with Courage  
 and Strength reaches out his Arm to seize  
 it; because it is not his Hand, but the  
 Pardon secures him. If an Israelite stung  
 by a fiery Serpent, could but just look with  
 half an Eye to the brazen Serpent, he was  
 healed, as well as another that beheld it  
 with



ESSAY with strong and steddy Eyes. If the Man-  
 II. flayer was never so lame and feeble, yet if  
 he could but reach the City of Refuge, he  
 was as secure from the Avenger, as he that  
 fled to it with the swiftest Feet. So he  
 that commits his guilty sinful Soul to *Christ*  
 for Salvation, though with a feeble Faith,  
 and far short of Perfection, yet a Righteous-  
 ness is given him; the *Righteousness of God*  
*is unto and upon all that believe, for there is*  
*no difference*; and a weak Believer is as se-  
 cure from Hell as a stronger, though he  
 cannot have so much present Evidence or  
 Comfort: And the Reason of his Safety is  
 because his believing is not his justifying  
 Righteousness, but is only a means to at-  
 tain it.

This is my present best Sett of Thoughts  
 upon this Subject; and though I have copied  
 them all from the Word of God, so far as  
 I have been able to understand the Mean-  
 ing of it, yet some subtile Disputer may  
 arise and tell me, he could embarrass my  
 Scheme with so many Objections, and press  
 it with such powerful Difficulties as are far  
 above my Skill to solve, and so constrain  
 me to renounce it.

If this Disputer can shew me that any  
 part of it is contrary to Scripture, I renounce  
 it freely; but though he might perplex it  
 with Difficulties which I could not easily  
 answer, yet I would not merely for that  
 Reason

Reason be bound immediately to renounce it: For there are many Texts of Scripture itself which are so embarrassed and perplexed by the cavelling Wit of the *Deists*, or *Socinians*, that it may be exceeding hard to give a fair and satisfactory Account of them; yet none of us, who are *Christians*, dare to renounce the Scripture, nor those very Texts that have so much Darknes about them; because we have so much stronger Proof of the Truth of Scripture. How many Difficulties are there in the Chronological and Historical parts, that seem scarce reconcilable by all the Learning and Reason of Men; and perhaps that Spirit only can reconcile them who knows what were his own Designs in writing, what the Idea that the first Writers fixed to each Word, what the Scene which they intended to convey to the first Readers, and what accidental Variations may have crept into the Text by the Ignorance or Negligence, the Bigotry or Sacrilege of the Transcribers. I have learnt from my youngest Years of Philosophy, not to renounce any Proposition, for which I see plain and sufficient Evidence from Reason and Revelation, though many Difficulties may attend it which I am not at present able to solve. I know the Weakness of human Nature.

S E C T.

Yet that I may make a clearer way for this Discourse, to the Assent of my Readers, I would give a Hint or two how the chief *Objections* that I can think of, may be removed.

*Object. I.* Some may oppose me by Scripture, and say, Among all the Texts that call the Gospel a *Law*, there is one that makes our Blessedness evidently to depend on our doing the Work commanded therein. *James i. 25. Whoso looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful Hearer, but a Doer of the Work, this Man shall be blessed in his Deed.* Now this looks like Justification by Obedience to the Commands of the Gospel, which is the proper Nature of a *Law*.

*Ans. I.* That the Gospel which hath Advices, Commands and Threatnings belonging to it should be sometimes called a *Law* in Scripture is no Wonder, for the Word *Law* among the *Jews*, was in so frequent Use upon all Occasions, that not only Doctrines, Rules and Constitutions were called *Laws*, but even the natural and supernatural Principles of human Actions. So *the Law of Kindness*, Prov. xxxi. 26. for good Humour, or a Principle of Love and Civility. So *the Law of Sin*, Rom. vii. 25. for the Principles of corrupt Nature and evil Inclinations. So  
the



the Law of the Spirit of Life, for a Principle of Holiness, *Rom. viii. 2.* And yet if all the Places where some suppose the Gospel to be called a *Law*, were well examined, we should find them reduced to a very few in reality: Whence it will appear that this is not the common Language of Scripture. The Text cited in the *Objection* seems rather to refer to the moral Law, which is called a *Law of Liberty*, because it is freed from its cursing and condemning Power by the Gospel, and made easy to Believers by their new Nature: Now, surely, no Christian will say that we are to be justified by doing the Works of the moral Law.

*Ans. II.* In those Places of the New Testament where the Gospel is, or is supposed to be called a *Law*, there is generally some qualifying Word added, as, *the Law of Faith*, *the Law of Liberty*, &c. that it may seem to stand in Opposition to a *Law of Works*, and appear distinct from a strict and proper *Law*.

*Ans. III.* There may be (as I have before hinted) many Blessings promised, and Blessings pronounced upon Obedience to any of the Commands of God, whether in the moral Law or Gospel; so *Psal. i. 1.* and *cxix. 1, 2.* so *Matth. v. 3--11.* But every such Blessing doth not signify the Justification of a Sinner in the Sight of God, his Release from the Guilt or Obligation to Hell, and

ESSAY and his first Right to Heaven. He that  
 II. obeys the Duties of the Law or Gospel in  
 any Measure or Degree, has some Sort of  
 Blessedness pronounced on him by the Fa-  
 vour and Condescension of God, for *in keep-*  
*ing any of his Commands there is great Re-*  
*ward*, Psalm xix. 11. especially to a Soul in  
 a State of Grace, and already justified by  
 Faith.

*Object.* II. Another may draw an Argu-  
 ment from Reason, and say, Whatsoever  
 Duties of Righteousness are required in any  
 Constitution or Covenant, the fulfilling those  
 Duties must in the very Nature and Reason  
 of Things be esteemed that *Righteousness* up-  
 on which that Constitution pronounces a  
 Man just or right in Court; so Faith justi-  
 fies us against the Charge of Unbelief, so  
 Repentance and sincere Obedience justify us  
 against the Charge of Impenitency and Hy-  
 pocrisy, and so Perseverance justifies us against  
 the Charge of Apostacy, because 'tis a Con-  
 formity to that Rule or Constitution which  
 requires Faith, Repentance, Perseverance,  
 &c.

*Ans.* It must be granted indeed, that in  
 the very Nature of Things our Faith justifies  
 us against the Charge of Unbelief, so far as  
 our Faith goes; and our Repentance and our  
 Love to God justify us against the Charge  
 of Impenitence, and hating God so far as  
 we do repent and love him; and our Meek-  
 ness

ness and Humility and Sincerity, justify us ESSAY II.  
 against the Charge of Pride and Passion, and  
 Hypocrisy, so far as we are meek, humble  
 and sincere: And in this Sense the Apostle  
*John* might say, *John* iii. 7. *He that doth*  
*Righteousness is righteous, as God is righte-*  
*ous,* (where *Righteousness* is evidently used for  
*Holiness*, and not in a forensick Sense, to sig-  
 nify *Justification*.) But all our Virtues and  
 Graces of Faith, Love, Repentance, &c.  
 are so very far from Perfection, and so much  
 below what the Holiness of God and his  
 Commands require, that the Spirit of God  
 in his Word, hath not thought fit to honour  
 these our Works with the Name of *Righte-*  
*ousness*, when he is describing the Way how  
 a Sinner is justified; nor hath he applied the  
 Term of *Justification* to these Performances  
 in those Places of Scripture where with a  
 plain Design and Exactness of Expression he  
 hath treated of the Righteousness that justifies  
 a Sinner before God. And the holy Apostle  
 seems cautious of using the Word *Justifica-*  
*tion*, when he is speaking of his own sincere  
 Obedience, *1 Cor.* iv. 4. *I know nothing by*  
*myself, yet am I not hereby justified;* tho' this  
 Justification refers only to the Charge of any  
 Negligence in the Discharge of his Aposto-  
 lical Office.

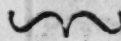
*Object.* III. Yet 'tis evident that there are  
 several Texts which speak of our Justifica-  
 tion by Works, as *James* ii. our Justification

F

by



ESSAY by our Words, *Matth. xii. 37.* and our

II. Right to Heaven by doing the Commands,  
 *Rev. xxii. 14. Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have a Right to the Tree of Life, &c.*

*Ans.* In those Places of Scripture where the Word *Justification* is used and attributed to our Duties or Graces, we must consider in what Sense *Justification* is taken.

1. There is a *Justification before Men*, and a *Justification in our own Consciences*; and in both these Respects our Repentance, our Love to God, our Good Works, all justify us against the Charges of wicked Men, and against the Charges of *Satan's* Temptations, or our own doubting Consciences, *i. e.* our Repentance shews we are not impenitent, and our Good Works shew that we are not full of wicked Works; and Good Works may be said to justify us also against the Charge of a false and hypocritical dead Faith, for they prove that our Faith is lively and true; and this is that *Justification* St. *James* intends, *Chap. ii. for ver. 18.* he says, *I will shew thee my Faith by my Works*; and 'tis in this Sense that he speaks of *Justification by Works*. So *Abraham* was justified from the Charge of a dead Faith, by his Zeal for God in offering up his Son, *Jam. ii. 21, 23. Thus was the Scripture fulfilled, i. e.* thus was the Truth and Honour of the Scripture maintained and cleared, which declares *Abraham* to be justified by Faith. Now tho' this Act of *Abraham's*

ham's Faith here mentioned, and *Gen.* xv. ESSAY  
 6. exercised on the exprefs Promise of the II.  
*Messiah*, be not the first Act of Faith that  
 ever he put forth, and tho' he might be in  
 a justified State long before, yet every repeat-  
 ed Act of true Faith confirms the justifying  
 Sentence, and shews the Way of his first Ju-  
 stification: And so every good Work he  
 performed may be said in another Sense to  
 confirm his Justification too, as it proves the  
 Truth of his Faith, and evidences him to  
 be justified.

2. There is a *Justification at the Day of Judgment*, which is only declarative, and de-  
 signed to publish and declare to all the World  
 the Equitableness of God's final Sentence,  
 adjudging some to Heaven and some to Hell:  
 And there our own Holiness, imperfect as it  
 is, may justify us against the Charge of be-  
 ing utterly wicked; what good Words we  
 have spoken may justify us against the Charge  
 of being always guilty of evil or idle Words:  
 They serve to distinguish the Character of  
 Saints and Sinners, and to make it appear  
 there is a Difference in their Practice, as well  
 as in their Recompences, as the Process of  
 that awful Day is represented, *Matth.* xxv.  
 And it is in this Sense that our Saviour saith  
 concerning the Day of Judgment, *Matth.*  
 xii. 37. *By thy Words thou shalt be justified,*  
*and by thy Words thou shalt be condemned;*  
 that is, your Words as well as your Actions

ESSAY shall have a Share in determining your Character before Men and Angels in that Day.

II. And that Text also in the Rev. xxii. 12, 14. refers evidently to the last Judgment, where it is said, *Behold I come quickly, and my Reward is with me, to give to every Man according as his Work shall be ; blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City.* The Sense of it is, that those who persevere to the End, in a sincere Obedience to the Commands of Christ, in all the Duties of Holiness, shall have a publick, adjudged and declared Right to the immediate Possession of Heaven ; which is a very different Thing from the Justification of a Sinner in the Sight of God, by his believing or trusting in Christ, which gives him the first Right ; and which is the precise Subject of St. Paul's Discourse, Rom. Chap. ii. iii. iv. and v. and Gal. Chap. ii. and iii.

'Tis on this Matter that our Divines are wont to make a Distinction between the *Jus hæreditarium*, or the *Right of Heirship* which a Son has to his Father's Estate as soon as he is born, (supposing his Father to be dead) and the *Jus aptitudinarium*, which is a *Right of Fitness*, and a Right to the immediate Possession, and this he has not till the Age of Manhood. Nor is this Distinction ill-framed, nor unaptly applied to the present Case ; for

Scripture



Scripture gives a plain Foundation for it, ESSAY  
*viz.* that we have the Right of *Heirship* at II.  
 our first believing, and the Right of *actual*  
*Fitness*, when we have fulfilled all the Services  
 God hath appointed us in this Life. The  
 Scriptures that naturally lead to this Distinction  
 are these : The Right of *Heirship* by  
 Faith is very plain, *Rom.* iv. 11, 13, 16.  
*Gal.* iii. 26, 29. *For ye are all the Children*  
*of God by Faith in Christ Jesus. And if ye*  
*be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and*  
*Heirs according to the Promise.* (Nor doth  
 the Apostle make much Distinction between  
 our Right to Heaven by Justification, and  
 that by Adoption or Inheritance, for both Ju-  
 stification and Adoption come by Faith ; and  
 he intermingles both, as they most fitly an-  
 swer his present Design ; which is evident by  
 comparing the Process of his Discourse from  
*Rom.* iv. 1--16. and *Rom.* v. 17, 18, 21.)  
 And then there is the Right of *Fitness* for im-  
 mediate Possession, *Heb.* x. 36. *For ye have*  
*Need of Patience, that after ye have done the*  
*Will of God, ye might receive the Promise ;*  
 and this is the Right intended, *Rev.* xxii. 14.  
 Now we may suppose both the Right of  
*Heirship* and of *Fitness* to be joined in that  
 Text, *Heb.* vi. 12. *Who through Faith and*  
*Patience inherit the Promises.* Through  
 Faith they are made Heirs at first, and through  
 Continuance in Faith and Patience they are  
 become actual Inheritors. Nor is that Text

ESSAY in Rom. x. 10. much unlike, *With the Heart*

II. *Man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation.*

Here Justification is attributed to Faith, and Salvation to the outward Profession of Christianity, including all the proper Effects and Evidences of Faith in a holy Life. And tho' *Salvation* in many Places of Scripture is put for *Justification*, because Justification is Salvation begun, yet when they are more accurately distinguished, the one is attributed to Faith, the other to Works, or to Faith and Works together.

Now, whatever other Sorts of *Justification* may be mentioned in Scripture, yet this *Justification* of a Sinner through Faith requires such a Righteousness as must secure us from all the Charges and Penalties of all the Guilt of every Sin both original and actual, from all the Charges of God's most holy and broken Law, from all the Charges of the Imperfection of our Faith, Repentance, and our best Works, and must set a Sinner right and make him righteous, and give him a Right to Life in the Court of that God who justified *Abraham* and *David* without Works, by *imputing Righteousness* to them, and continues under the Gospel the same Way to *justify the Ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5, 6. i. e. all that we do in a way of Duty or Godliness, is not respected in this Court, but we are look'd upon as *ungodly*, and without all Righteousness

ness in ourselves, and as such have a Right-ESSAY  
ousness, or a Right to Life bestowed on us, II.  
or are justified of mere Grace.

And tho' here and there, for wise Pur-  
poses, an Expression may be dropt occasio-  
nally in Scripture, that may favour another  
Way of speaking, yet in the Descriptions of  
the Gospel, the Way of a Sinner's Justifi-  
cation in the Sight of God at his Conversion,  
is never put upon fulfilling of the Gospel-  
duties, as the Matter of his Justifying Righ-  
teousness; and therefore the *Gospel* is not a  
proper *Law*: And whatsoever Forms of  
Speech some Persons may fancy agreeable to  
the Nature and Reason of Things, yet this  
which I have described is the most com-  
mon Way wherein the Penmen of Scripture  
represent those Things, when they seem to  
aim at an accurate and distinct Description  
of the Law and Gospel: Now Scripture  
is our surest Rule of speaking in Matters of  
pure Revelation.

To sum up all in short: The Word *Law*  
is taken in various Senses in the Bible: In  
some Places it means inward Principles of  
Action, as the *Law of Kindness*, the *Law of*  
*Sin*; sometimes it signifies only Directions and  
Rules of Life, as *Prov. xiii. 14. the Law of*  
*the Wise*, i. e. Rule of Wisdom. In other  
Places it includes all the Orders and Injuncti-  
ons that relate to one Subject; as *the Law*  
*of the Nazarite*, Numb. vi. 13. *the Law of*



ESSAY *the Burnt-Offering*, Lev. vi. 9. Sometimes

II. 'tis taken in so large a Latitude as to take in  
 ~~~~~ all Doctrines, Counsels and Advices, Com-  
 mands, Promises, Threatnings, including  
 Prophecies, Histories and Examples also; so  
 the *Law* frequently signifies all the five Books  
 of *Moses*. And in these Senses the *Gospel* in  
 its largest Signification has several Laws be-  
 longing to it, and itself may be called a *Law*.  
 The Scripture indulges a sparing Use of it in  
 such a Sense. But the Word *Law* in its  
 most proper and strict Sense signifies a Con-  
 stitution where Duties are required, which  
 if neglected, subject the Offender to a Penal-  
 ty, and if performed, they are his Justifying  
 Righteousness; and in this Sense Scripture  
 doth not at all favour the Application of this  
 Name to the *Gospel*: For it is abundantly e-  
 vident, that the Words *Law* and *Gospel* taken  
 in their most proper and limited Senses, are  
 constantly distinguished from each other, and  
 set in direct Opposition in the New Testa-  
 ment.

Thus have I thrown into some Order  
 those few, plain, reconciling Thoughts be-  
 tween the contending Parties of Christians,  
 and am already almost in Pain to think that  
 I shall a little displease all Parties, because all  
 these Thoughts will hardly square and ad-  
 just themselves exactly to any of the popu-  
 lar and settled *Schemes of Orthodoxy*; or at  
 least, they will never agree with the Extremes  
 on

on either hand : Yet if they appear to be ESSAY drawn merely from the Scripture, and to II. speak the Language of the Holy Writers, then this Discourse will approve itself to those who maintain the most sacred Regard to the Bible ; and those Schemes should be a little moulded and bent, to adjust them to the Language of Scripture, even when it uses different Forms of Speech. But I shall not enter farther into this Controversy, because my Design is to soften the angry Tempers of Men, that they may not rage against each other when they use different Forms of speaking, as the Scripture itself does, and make an Apology for both Sides, while they agree in the Things that are most substantial and necessary.

#### S E C T. IV.

##### *Reconciling Sentiments.*

Now that I may proceed in this reconciling Work, I shall follow this Method.

I. Represent the *different Apprehensions and different Language of Men in Preaching the Gospel.*

II. Mention some of the *Causes or Occasions of these different Apprehensions.*

III. Give a Hint or two of the *Conveniencies and Inconveniencies of each of these Ways of Preaching.*

IV. Shew

ESSAY IV. Shew the *Safety* and *Sufficiency* of  
II. *each, with regard to Salvation.*

~~~~~ V. Conclude with a Word or two of *Request* or *humble Advice.*

*First*, let me represent the *various Apprehensions* of Men in those Matters: But here I would be understood to describe only the moderate Men among those who are called *Calvinists*, and those that are named *New-Methodists*; as for the High-Flyers, or extreme and rigid Party-Men of either Side, I leave them out in my present Account, while I mention the little Differences among the Men of Moderation, among whom I reckon far the greatest part of the *Protestant Dissenters* in *England*, to be at this time, and I hope I am not mistaken in this Opinion.

Some when they read or pronounce the Words *Law* or *Gospel*, take them generally in their loosest and largest Sense, and so they unite their Names, and make them consistent together; others are ready to take those Words in their limited and proper Sense, and then they divide them into very distinct Things, and will not allow their Names so promiscuous a Use.

Some Ministers love to explain the *Gospel* in a more *legal* way, and describe it as a *conditional Covenant* that requires Agreements and Restipulations from Men; they insist much on vowing and resolving to submit



mit to the Commands of *Christ*, and with a lively Zeal and powerful Eloquence, they inforce the Duties of Repentance, sincere Obedience, Watchfulness and Perseverance; and shew how much the Promises of Life, Heaven and Glory, Peace and daily Pardon depend on these Qualifications and Performances, pronouncing the terrible Threatnings of Damnation on the Impenitent, the Unbelieving, and the Disobedient, to awaken the secure Sinner, and stir up the slothful Christian. Others delight more in representing the *Gospel* as a *Declaration of Grace and free Promise* of Salvation to Sinners; a Promise of pardoning Mercy, Sanctifying Grace, and everlasting Glory to sinful and perishing Criminals, and invite Sinners to receive all this Grace, to accept of this Salvation, and to trust in this Saviour, according to the Offers of the *Gospel*: When its Truths are revealed, the first Sort chuse to say, that the Moral Law of Nature in the Hand of *Christ*, commands us to believe them; when its Duties are mention'd, they rather say, the Law of Nature in the Hand of *Christ* requires Obedience to them; and that while the *Gospel* in its proper Language promises Salvation to Believers, the Moral Law, or Law of Nature, binds Condemnation on the Unbeliever, and the Impenitent; but the pure *Gospel* is all Grace and Mercy: And they preach the Law of Works

ESSAY Works in the Perfection of its Demands and

II. Terror of its Penalties, to drive Sinners for  
 ~~~~~ Refuge to the Gospel : And they press the  
 Duties of Holiness on their Hearers from a  
 comfortable Sense of their Deliverance from  
 Hell, and from Gratitude to *Christ*, as Evi-  
 dences of their Faith, as Preparatives for  
 Heaven, and as necessary, both in the Na-  
 ture of Things, and by divine Appointment  
 in order to our final Happiness.

Those that follow the *conditional* Way of  
 preaching the *Gospel*, describe the chief Act  
 of *Faith*, as a *Consent of Will* to submit  
 themselves to him in all his Offices ; a Con-  
 sent to take him for their *Prophet*, and Re-  
 solution to make all his Instructions their  
 Rule and Guide ; a Consent to take him  
 for their *Priest*, to make their Peace with  
 God, and obtain their Pardon ; a Consent  
 to own him for their *King*, and promise  
 sincere Obedience to him as their Lord in  
 all his Commands ; but still with an humble  
 Dependance on his Spirit and Grace, to en-  
 able them to fulfil these Resolutions.

Those that preach the *Gospel* in its more  
 free and *absolute Form* describe *Faith* in  
*Christ* as the Flight of a poor, guilty, pe-  
 rishing Sinner to an only Refuge ; and they  
 make its chief Act to consist in a trusting or  
 committing the Soul, ignorant, guilty, hard-  
 hearted and sinful as it is, into the Hand of  
*Christ*, with a sincere Desire to have it en-  
 lightened

lightened by him as their Prophet, par-ESSAY  
don'd and reconciled to God thro' him as II.  
their Priest, and subdued to all willing O-  
bedience to him, and by him, as their Lord  
and King; humbly expecting that he will  
do all this for them; and this is in their O-  
pinion the best way of addressing themselves  
to poor Sinners, who find themselves so  
dark, so sinful, so feeble and inconstant in  
their best Obedience and Purposes, that they  
dare not resolve upon any thing, and can  
hardly say, they heartily vow and promise a  
Submission to *Christ* in all Things; but that  
they can better apply to him in a way of  
Trust and Dependance, humbly desiring  
and hoping he will work all this in them by  
his free Grace, while they wait upon him in  
his appointed Means.

The one are ever persuading their Hearers  
to bind their Souls to God, by solemn Vows  
and Covenants, even in particular Duties,  
believing this to be the most effectual Way  
to guard against every Sin, and best secure  
their Obedience and Constancy under every  
Temptation: The other are afraid to urge  
so much vowing and resolving on the Con-  
sciences of Men, lest they thereby lead  
them into a legal Frame, under a Spirit of  
Bondage, and lest their Consciences be  
more troublesomely entangled and ensnared  
after every broken Vow, and their Faith and  
Hope be too much discouraged; that Faith  
and



ESSAY and Hope which ought to be the constant

II. Springs of their Obedience. They advise  
 ~~~~~ their People, therefore, rather to commit  
 their Souls afresh continually to the Care of  
*Christ*, as 2 *Tim.* i. to believe he accepts  
 them, and to walk watchfully, without any  
 particular, formal, and explicit Vows. Tho'  
 it must be confessed, that with regard to  
 Christians of different Tempers and Temp-  
 tations, both these Methods have had very  
 good Success.

Some are Sons of Thunder, *Boanerges*,  
 and frighten the Profane out of their Secu-  
 rity, by many Terrors that are written a-  
 gainst those who obey not the Gospel; and  
 they inforce Obedience on the Consciences  
 of Believers, chiefly by way of Rewards and  
 Punishments: The other are like *Barnabas's*,  
 Sons of Consolation, and perswade Sinners  
 to accept of the offer'd Grace, by all the  
 Allurements of the Compassion of God, and  
 by the dying Love of a Redeemer, beseech-  
 ing them to be reconciled: And they draw  
 out the Hearts of Believers to Repentance,  
 and lead them with the Spirit of Power and  
 Love to an easy and connatural Obedience  
 by the Constraints of the Love of *Christ*,  
 and by a humble Perswasion of their Accep-  
 tance in him unto eternal Life.

In short, the one dwell most upon the Du-  
 ties of the Gospel in their Sermons, in or-  
 der to qualify their Hearers for the Privi-  
 leges;

leges; the other insist most on the Privileges ESSAY  
and Comforts of the Gospel, in order to in- II.  
vite and allure them to fulfil the Duties, and  
to give their Hearers Strength and Delight  
in the Discharge of these Duties.

I would not here be understood, as though I supposed either of those Ministers never to mingle Mercy and Terror, Precepts, Penalties, and Promises; for it must be acknowledged, there are some Persons of each Opinion, in whom all the Talents of a Preacher happily unite, and they honourably sustain both Characters, the *Sons of Thunder*, and the *Sons of Consolation*; and all of them make Conscience of publishing to Men both Divine Grace and their Duty, all of them preach Repentance toward God, and Faith in our Lord *Jesus Christ*; but those who have chosen one Scheme of Divinity for their own, more generally bend their Ministry the one way, and those who have chosen the other preach more usually in the other way.

All our *Protestant* Confessions of Faith, and I would persuade myself that our Ministers, at least among the *Nonconformists*, agree that, though Duties are required to be performed by us, yet the Grace that is necessary to perform them is given freely to us; that though Faith and Repentance, and sincere Obedience, are indispensably necessary, in order to our final Salvation, yet they

ESSAY they are not the justifying Righteousness.

II. upon account of which our Sins are pardoned, and eternal Life is bestowed upon us: That the Obedience and Death, and Intercession of *Christ*, as a proper High-Priest and Sacrifice, are the only Foundation of our Acceptance with God, and ground of all our Hopes; and that from him, as a Head of Influence, we must receive all Grace, whereby we are conducted safe to Glory.

Both Sides agree that we are to *work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, but that it is *God who worketh in us to will and to do*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. That *we are saved by the Faith* of the Son of God, and *not by Works*, lest any should boast; yet that we must also be *created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*, for God hath appointed that we should *walk in them*, Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10.

II. In the next place, that I may make a little further Apology for those that are humble, honest and sincere on both Sides, I would consider the various *Causes* or *Occasions*, whence different Apprehensions of Men about these things may arise: And here we shall find poor frail Mankind, almost universally born and brought up in Prejudices to some Party or other, encompassed with a thousand things that tend to influence the Judgment, and incline it insensibly toward some particular Opinion; so that



a whole Scheme of Doctrines built upon a ESSAY pure and zealous and laborious Search after II. Truth, without any manner of Byas or Corruption on any Side, is scarce to be found in human Nature. There is no Man alive free from these Weaknesses. Happy the Mind that has the fewest of them.

*Nam vitiis nemo sine nascitur, optimus ille est  
Qui minimis urgetur.* Horace.

It may be these Ministers themselves, who differ in Opinion, are of very different natural Complexions and Tempers, and this hath a secret Influence in swaying their Mind, their Studies, their Judgment and Ministry one way or the other; though all those who agree in natural Temper, are not always of the same Opinion.

Or it may be, they had an Education under Teachers and Tutors of different Sentiments, or have met with Books of different Principles and Opinions, which have made a strong and lasting Impression upon their Minds, and engag'd them betimes into one Party, before they had strength of Judgment to determine their Opinions upon just Arguments.

Some Persons in order to settle their Judgments in these Points, have studied more and prayed less, and some have prayed more and studied too little; and some on both

G

Sides

ESSAY Sides have studied hard, and pray'd much,  
 II. and sought earnestly the Instructions of  
 the blessed Spirit, and yet have fallen in-  
 to different ways of thinking in those parts  
 of Christianity which are not of Ne-  
 cessity to Salvation, and have been suffer'd  
 to follow different Forms of Speech for wise  
 Purposes in the Providence of God.

Some little Accident or Occurrence of  
 Life, or some sudden start of Thought,  
 while the Balance of the Judgment was in  
 Suspence, has perhaps given it a turn to one  
 Side or the other, and perhaps determin'd  
 it for their whole Lives.

Some have happened to form their Sett  
 of Doctrines at first more by their own  
 reasoning Powers, and drawn their Schemes  
 of Religion from what they imagine the most  
 natural Connection, the Necessity or Con-  
 gruity of things, and they call the Bible only  
 to their Assistance, and seek proper Texts to  
 confirm their own System: Others draw  
 the whole Scheme of Doctrines from a con-  
 stant and intent Application to the holy Scrip-  
 ture, and call in Reason to their Assistance,  
 only in order to understand and methodize  
 those Doctrines: And though the first way  
 of Study in Matters of the *Christian* Religion,  
 is by no means to be justified, yet too many  
 have unhappily practis'd it; and though the  
 latter way is much to be preferred, and most  
 likely to come near the Truth, yet it is not  
 followed

followed by all who preach the Gospel; and no wonder then that Ministers may differ in their Thoughts. ESSAY II.

Such is the Weakness of human Nature, that as some of us form and build up our first Opinions upon very slight and insufficient grounds, and there are many who persist in them, and strongly maintain them without an honest Re-examination, so others of us change our Opinions upon Reasons as slight and feeble and insufficient. Some Persons having been perplexed with one or two great Difficulties in that Scheme of Sentiments which they have professed, and being unable to grapple with them, have by swift or slow Degrees, abandoned that whole Scheme, and fell in with another, which perhaps hath equal or greater Difficulties in it; never considering that the whole System of *Christianity*, with all its Appendices, is so vast, and our View of things is so narrow, and our Knowledge so imperfect, that a sharp Disputant may push some parts of all our human Schemes into great Perplexities, even such as human Reason can hardly solve; and perhaps God alone knows how to reconcile them, in whose single View all things lie for ever fair and open, perfectly consistent, and are comprehended at once.

Or it may be the *Way and Method of Divine Grace in the first Conversion* of the one



ESSAY and the other was very different. Some

II. were wrought upon at first more by legal  
 ~~~~~ Methods, and the Terrors of the Law of  
 God, and they find them still to have the  
 greatest and most powerful Influence on  
 their Consciences; others from their wild  
 Wandrings were brought home to *Christ*  
 by gentle Discoveries of Divine Love in the  
 Death of a Saviour: Some, like the Jaylor,  
*Acts xvi. 26, — 30.* have had their Con-  
 sciences shaken as with an Earthquake,  
*they came in trembling and crying out, What*  
*must I do to be saved?* Others had their  
 Hearts *softly open'd*, as was the Heart of  
*Lydia*, 14th ver. of the same Chapter, and  
 they received the Word of Grace and the  
 Gospel; and they find the Work of God  
 carried on upon their own Souls, still by the  
 most evangelical Methods. Now a Man's  
 own early Experiences in the things of Re-  
 ligion, will naturally have a great Influence  
 on his Opinions; and God in his infinite Wis-  
 dom hath ordered it should be so, that Per-  
 sons of every Sort and Temper, and Humour,  
 Young and Old, Sinners and Saints, under  
 every kind of Temptation, might meet with  
 some Ministers of the Gospel, and some  
 Sermons and Writings to suit their Taste,  
 to hit their Case, and be the most effectual  
 Means of their Salvation.

The *Third thing* I propos'd here was to  
 shew briefly, that as *each of these ways of*  
*preaching*

*preaching have their several Advantages,* ESSAY  
so each of them have their *special Inconve-* II.  
*niences* too, if they are perpetually and only  
insisted on, unless well managed by the ex-  
traordinary Prudence of the Preacher.

*The one* aims most at the *Glory of Di-*  
*vine Equity*, in Rewards and Punishments,  
and contends much for the *Sincerity of God*  
in all his Transactions with Men: The other  
seems to look most at honouring *the Sovereignty,*  
*the Riches and Freedom of Divine*  
*Grace,* and God's infinite Condescension  
and Compassion to sinful Creatures.

*One* seems to lead *Christians* more to a  
strict Scrupulosity in every Action, in order  
to make up the undoubted Evidences of a  
Gospel-Perfection, which they call *Sincerity*,  
and thereby to raise their Hopes of escaping  
Hell and obtaining Heaven; it drives the  
Soul to Duties, and maintains a trembling  
Watchfulness; but is in Danger of govern-  
ing it by a Spirit of Bondage, and of keep-  
ing our Faith and Comfort very low. The  
other leads to equal Holiness, or perhaps to  
higher Degrees of it by the delightful Con-  
straints of a filial Love, by the sweet Influ-  
ences of Divine Consolation; but there may  
be some Danger of encouraging Negligence  
and Presumption, and that not only in Sin-  
ners, but even sometimes in Believers them-  
selves, if not wisely managed and guarded.

ESSAY Upon this Subject I might here give my  
 II. Pen into the Hand of some sprightly Advocate of each Party, and have forty more Pages written for me speedily, without any Thought or Labour of mine; this would swell my *Essay* up finely, and enlarge it to a Volume, with many a name of *Arminian* and *Antinomian* dealt about freely on the opposite Opinions: For the supposed Advantages and Disadvantages on both Sides, are frequently mentioned as Arguments of each Party against the other; but I shall not think necessary to insist longer on them here for that very Reason: And tho' these sort of moral Arguments drawn from the Design and Tendency of things, may be justly used on both Sides, and on both Sides have some Degree of Truth and Force in them, yet both may not have equal Force: Nor do I think it inconsistent with my Design in this reconciling Discourse, to declare my own Sentiments: "For a Man may be very happy in making Peace between two quarrelling Neighbours, though he is well perswaded that one hath the better Side of the Cause, and in a friendly manner expresseth it too."

I will not be ashamed then to declare, that in my Opinion, one Method of preaching the Gospel hath greater Advantages in it, and fewer Inconveniences than the other; supposing still that we guard against Extremes:  
 that



that one seems more connatural to the Ge-  
 nius of the *Gospel*, as it is distinct from a  
*Covenant of Works*, and seems to suit better  
 with the most glorious Designs of Divine  
 Grace. My own Experience in the things  
 of Religion, my Observations of some others,  
 and my diligent Search of the holy Scrip-  
 tures (I hope not without Divine Aid) hath  
 led my Thoughts rather to favour and prac-  
 tice the more Evangelical Method of preach-  
 ing most frequently: But another Person  
 who follows a different way may tell me, he  
 came by his Turn of Thoughts the same  
 way as I did by mine, and my Charity de-  
 mands that I believe it. Yet while both  
 Sides maintain those great Truths, wherein  
 I mentioned the general Agreement of our  
*Protestant* Confessions of Faith, I cannot  
 conceive that either of them can lead Sin-  
 ners astray from Salvation.

And that is the *Fourth Proposal* I made,  
 (*viz.*) to shew the real *Safety* of each of  
 these Methods in ministering the Gospel both  
 to Saints and Sinners, and that is evident,  
 because they agree in the most necessary  
 and essential Parts of it. Both of them  
 preach Grace and Duty, Justification by  
*Christ*, and Sanctification by the holy Spirit,  
 and teach Men all that is of Necessity to be  
 believed and practised in order to Salvation.

If two Men sitting under a different Mi-  
 nistry are brought sincerely to repent of all

ESSAY Sin, and to love God with all their Heart,

II. can I imagine that one shall be damned, because he tells me he repents in Obedience to the Commands of the Gospel? Or the other, because he doth it in Obedience to the moral Law in the Hand of *Christ*, supposing the pure Gospel to have no Commands in it? If two Sinners are persuaded to accept of *Christ Jesus* for their Lord and Saviour, can I ever believe, that God will condemn one of them, because he first resolved to obey *Christ* as his Lord, and thereby took Encouragement to trust in him as a Saviour? or that God will punish the other for ever, because he first trusted in *Christ* as a Saviour, and thereby found his Will sweetly inclined to submit to him as his Lord? Where all Duties required in the Gospel are sincerely performed, can I ever be persuaded Men shall be ever sent to Hell, merely because they do not agree about the *logical Relations* that these Duties have to one another, or to their Salvation, while both agree to lay the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and his Righteousness, or his Obedience and Death, as the only Foundation of all their Hopes?

If either of these Ways of preaching the Gospel were so contrary to Scripture, and such abominable and pernicious Errors in the Sight of God as angry and quarreling Men of both Sides represent them, I cannot persuade myself that God would so far have favoured

favoured both, in these Instances follow-  
ing. (*viz.*)

II.

I. If either of these Ways of preaching were so criminal and dangerous as some have supposed, I cannot think the Spirit of God would have used those Expressions in Scripture, which sometimes seem to represent the Covenant of Grace in one Form, and sometimes in another; nor that he would have suffered the Pen-men of his holy Word to have given Occasion to such different Sentiments on this Subject among his Favourites, his holy Worshipers, and those who have sought his Directions and his Grace with much Importunity and Perseverance.

II. If either of these Ways of preaching were so dangerous as some have imagined, I cannot believe that the blessed God would ever have attended both these Ways of preaching with his Blessing, so far as to convert great Numbers of Sinners by them, and edify his Saints; but it is sufficiently evident that Ministers of very different Apprehensions in these Points have been owned and blessed of God to the Conversion, Comfort and Salvation of many Souls.

III. If either of these Representations of the Gospel were so very dangerous, I cannot imagine, that Persons of good Understanding, of deep Learning, of large Knowledge in Religion, of long Experience, and of great



ESSAY

II.



great Holiness, should maintain their Opinions in these Things so very different to their Lives End, if their Salvation were in such extreme hazard thereby, however in the Infancy of their *Christianity* they might have received and embraced these different Apprehensions. Surely if these Points had been of so dreadful and dangerous Importance on either Side, God would have granted a greater Union in Sentiment to so great a Number of his Children, who laboured in sincere Enquiry after Truth, constant and fervent Prayer for the Teaching of the blessed Spirit, and were truly zealous for his Honour. Divine Goodness surely would not have suffered such Multitudes of holy Souls on either Side to continue always in Mistakes of so terrible Consequence as some Disputers have represented them.


## S E C T. V.

*Advices or Requests.*

May I be permitted at the End of this Discourse to drop a Word or two of general *Advice*, or rather of humble Request to all, but especially to my younger Brethren in the Ministry.

I. *Request.* Pay a constant and sacred Reverence to the Language of Scripture, and let it appear in these following Instances.

1<sup>st</sup>. Let the Forms of Speech that are used in those Scriptures where the Doctrines of

of the Gospel are expressly laid down and ESSAY  
proved, be the Speech in which you com- II.  
monly teach those Doctrines; and let the   
Language wherein warm and pathetical Exhortations are given in Scripture, be the Language which you generally imitate in your affectionate Addresses to the Consciences of Saints and Sinners; the one as well as the other are given for our Example. Whereas if we should preach and explain the deepest Truths in all the affectionate Forms and Flourishes of Speech and Metaphor, 'tis the way to lead the Judgments of Hearers astray; but while we submit ourselves to the Words which the Holy Spirit useth as our Pattern, both in teaching, and also in exhorting, we may humbly expect his inward Teachings to enlighten our own Understandings, and make our Labours in the Gospel powerful to the Salvation of them that hear us.

2dly, Let those Words which are not used in Scripture never be zealously maintained and insisted on as necessary to Salvation, and especially where they give great Offence: Nor let those Terms and Ways of Expression which Scripture useth but very seldom, and upon particular Occasions, be the perpetual or constant Language of your Ministry, in Opposition to those Expressions and Ways of Representation which Scripture most frequently delights to use; and let no authentic  
Systems

ESSAY Systems of Divinity, to which you are most inclined, nor the Names of great Men ever prevail with you to break this Rule.

3dly, Dare not indulge yourself in a Disgust to any Scripture Language, or an Aversion to those Scriptures which seem to run in a Stile and Expression different from the Language which you generally chuse; for even those Expressions were designed for useful Purposes by the Holy Spirit, and doubtless have attained some happy End in the Providence of God, in particular Cases and Persons: If you should once encourage such a vicious Humour, it might proceed so far at last, as to render a great Part of the Bible the Object of your Disgust. Be sure therefore always to maintain upon your Spirit such a reverential Tenderness for the Holy Scripture, that you may never dare to rail against any Expressions that Scripture useth, nor oppose them with Violence, without a modest Distinction in what Sense they are proper, and in what Sense they are to be avoided. And this leads me to the *Second Request*.

II. *Request*. When you hear any Ministers, in preaching the Gospel, use the Words *Free and absolute, Conditional, Unconditional, Promises, Laws, Threatnings, Commands, &c.* Exercise so much Charity as to believe they use them in such a Sense as the Scripture approves of, and as secures the Salvation of Men, according to their sincerest Apprehensions.

If



If the Preacher speak of the *Gospel*, as a *ESSAY* free and absolute *Promise*, always suppose II. he intends also, that all the Duties of Repentance and Holiness are necessary, in order to Salvation, tho' he does not like to call them *Conditions*. If another should insist much on *Conditions* in the Gospel, suppose he means none of them to be performed merely by your own Strength, nor to include any thing of *Merit* in them. If he speak of the *Laws of Christ*, understand him concerning all those Rules and Directions, and Commands, which *Christ* hath given to his Followers, but not in the strict and perfect Notion of a *Law*. Even if he calls the Gospel a *Law*, believe that he intends it only in the largest Sense, and doth not mean that we are justified in the Sight of God, by our Performance of the Duties of this Law as the proper Matter of our Righteousness before God: Or if he should happen to mention any such thing as Justification by our good Works of Holiness, &c. take due heed to the Connexion, and let Charity persuade you that he is speaking concerning *Justification before Men*, or *Justification in our own Consciences*, or *in the Day of Judgment*, and not of a Sinner's Justifying Righteousness in the Sight of God, when he is first converted and accepted of him thro' Faith in *Jesus Christ*.

Suffer

## ESSAY

## II.

Suffer not your Disgust and Anger immediately to be kindled at the Sound of any of these Words, as tho' they were at once undermining and perverting the Gospel of *Christ*. Nor ever give yourself leave to reproach Ministers, as no Preachers of the Gospel, merely because they chuse other Modes of Expression than those which you most esteem, and frequently use; for such a Conduct will warp and bind down the Consciences and Spirits of Men to a narrow and an uncharitable Partiality. This will render every Sermon offensive to them that is not conceived just in their beloved Language, and will utterly prevent their Profit by the various Gifts *Christ* has bestowed on his Ministers. There are some common *Christians* in our Age, who are most unhappy Instances of this *unchristian* Temper; and 'tis to these Persons chiefly, that I give this *second Advice*.

III. *Request.* Avoid all the high Flights and Extremes of zealous Party Men, and which Way of preaching soever you approve and pursue, be sure to guard against all Extremes, both of Notion and Language. Let the Hopes of exalting Free Grace never persuade you to neglect to enforce the Duties of the Gospel, and to press them with Zeal on the Consciences of all Men: Nor let the Fear of encouraging Licentiousness ever tempt you to turn the Gospel of Grace into a Covenant of Works: For God in his Gospel of Free  
Grace

Grace hath sufficiently provided for the Honour of his Holiness, and the Sanctification of his own Children.

ESSAY  
II.

You will tell me here perhaps, that Scripture itself useth Expressions as high upon particular Occasions, and as much leaning to Extremes as any Men of Party among us. But remember then, that the Scripture uses such strong and high Expressions not on one Side only, but on both Sides, and infinite Wisdom hath done this more forcibly to argue and impress some present Truth or Duty: But while it is evident the holy Writers have used high Expressions, strong Figures of Speech, and vehement Turns on both Sides, this sufficiently instructs us that we should be moderate in our Censures of either Side, and that the calm doctrinal Truth, stript of all Rhetoric and Figures, lies nearer to the middle, or at least that some of these appearing Extremes, are more reconcilable than angry Men will generally allow. If the Apostle charges the *Corinthians*, *so run that ye may obtain*, 1 Cor. ix. 24. and tells the *Romans*, *it is not of him that willet or of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth Mercy*, Rom. ix. 16. we may plainly infer that our Running and his Mercy, our Diligence and Divine Grace, are both necessary to our Salvation.

IV. Request. *Let the particular Tempers, Temptations and Dangers of Persons with whom*



ESSAY *whom you converse, or with whom you*

II. *preach, together with the growing Errors of the Times, have always some Weight with you, to bend your Ministry a little more the one way or the other:* And never affect to preach these Matters in a disputative and controversial Way, but rather in a plain and practical Form, except the Temptations of the Age and Nation, or of particular Churches or Christians seem to demand it. And indeed this seems to be one great Reason, why Scripture itself in different Parts of it sometimes manages the Argument in a way of Dispute, and at other times gives a different practical Turn to the same Truth, and uses so different Language in the Representation of the same Doctrines. For the several Books of Scripture were written according to the various Necessities of the Church of God, and to obviate Temptations of contrary Kinds, and to prevent the Danger of Errors arising, by running to Extremes on either Side.

In the last Age, in the Times of the Civil Wars, *Antinomianism* and Errors of that Nature, were very common in the Nation: This turned the Labours and Study of many pious Men to vindicate and preach up the Duties of the Gospel, and Works of Holiness, as the proper Business of the Day. In this present Age, the *Popish* and *Pelagian* Doctrines of Justification by Works, and Salvation

vation by the Power of our own Free-will, ESSAY  
 are publickly maintained and preach'd abundantly thro' the Land: The *Socinian* and the *Arminian* Errors are revived and spread exceedingly, whereby *Jesus Christ* is robb'd of his God-head, or his Satisfaction, or both, and the blessed Spirit deny'd in the Glory of his Offices: For *Deism* and *Natural Religion*, in Opposition to *Christianity*, daily prevail. II.

Now, perhaps, some may think it the Duty and Business of the Day to temporize, and by preaching the *Gospel* a little more conformably to *Natural Religion*, in a mere rational or legal Form, to bring it down as near as may be to their Scheme, that we may gain them to hear and approve it, or at least, that we may not offend them. But I am rather of Opinion, that we should in such a Day stand up for the Defence of the Gospel in the full Glory of its most important Doctrines, and in the full Freedom of its Grace; that we should preach it in its divinest and most Evangelical Form, that the Cross of *Christ*, by the promised Power of the Spirit, may vanquish the vain Reasonings of Men, and that this despised Doctrine triumphing in the Conversion of Souls, may confound the Wise and the Mighty, and silence the Disputers of this World. This was the bold and glorious Method St. *Paul* took at *Corinth*, where Learning and Reason and Philosophy flourished in Pride; but

H

they

ESSAY they yielded several Trophies of Victory to

II. the preaching of the Cross. *Paul* could use the *Wisdom of Words* whensoever he had occasion for it, and had the *Excellency of Speech* at command when he pleased: this appears in several Parts of his Writings; yet in his Sermons at *Corinth*, he disclaimed it all, and *determined to know nothing among them but Christ, and him crucified.* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

Happy that Man who hath attained the holy Skill of joining Promises and Commands, Duties and Privileges, Authority, Terror and Grace; and who mingles them all wisely in his Ministry; who hath learnt of *St. Paul* the Divine Art of addressing himself to the Reason, the Consciences, and the Passions of Men in such variety of Expressions, of Power, Terror and Love, as may most effectually answer the Ends of his Office. Happy is he that knows how to display the Gospel in all Forms under which Scripture represents it, to preach to the *Jews*, and to teach the *Gentiles*; to talk to the Righteous and the Wicked in proper Language, to the obstinate Rebel, to the trembling Sinner, and to the mourning Saint. Happy is he that *becomes all to all that he may gain the more Souls*, 1 Cor. ix. 19, &c. sometimes as *without the Law, yet under a Law to Christ*; sometimes as with the Law, yet free from the Bondage of it; that never *strives about Words to no Profit*, but *knows how to di-*



*vide the Word of Truth aright, and to give every one their Portion : This is the Workman that needs not to be ashamed, and hath most reason to hope for Success. 2 Tim. ii. 14, 15.* ESSAY II.

To conclude, *Let us all apply ourselves with unbiass'd Minds, with new Diligence and fervent Prayers, to search the Word of God, and draw all our Notions of the Gospel thence :* Let us enquire into the Spiritual State, the Dangers and Necessities of the People to whom we minister, and this will be of great Use to guide us to proper Subjects and Methods of Discourse.

Let our Conversation be such, as becomes the Gospel in every Form of it, whether absolute or conditional. Let our close walking with God be exemplary and instructive, that Men may see our Religion as well as hear it, and all may confess, that while we preach the Gospel, we are zealous Observers of the Law. Let us maintain upon our own Hearts a sweet and honourable Sense of the Riches of Free Grace in *Christ*, together with a tender Sense of the Evil of Sin, and a lively Delight in Holiness, that the daily Experience of our own Souls, and our inward Christianity which is taught us, and wrought in us by the Spirit of God, may instruct us how to preach to others.

Let that Gospel which is *written in the fleshly Tables of our Hearts, i. e. in our very Souls, by the Finger of God,* be manifested in

ESSAY every Part of our Ministrations for the Good  
 II. of Men. Thus we shall obtain the Appro-  
 ~~~~~ bation of *Jesus* our Judge, in preaching his  
 Gospel of Faith and Love, and thus shall we  
 have the Pleasure of this Testimony in our  
 own Consciences, that in the general Course  
 of our Ministry we have sought to save the  
 Souls of others in the same way as we our-  
 selves have sought to be saved : And that we  
 have proposed the same Truths to them, and  
 recommended the same Duties, which we  
 ourselves believe and practise, in order to our  
 own Salvation. *Amen.*

ESSAY

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## ESSAY III.

### *The True Use of the MORAL LAW under the G O S P E L.*

Exemplify'd in the Conference of CHRIST  
with a young *Pharisee*, explain'd in a SER-  
MON, May 1711.

MATT. xix. 17.

— *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the  
Commandments.*

### S E C T. I.

#### *The INTRODUCTION.*

**H**ERE it will be necessary to run over  
the short Conference between *Christ*  
and this young Man, which is recorded by  
several of the Evangelists, because it will give  
us a plainer Account how these Words are  
introduced, and lead us into the Knowledge  
of the true Design of them.

Read from the 16th to the 23d Verse. *And  
behold one came and said unto him, good Master,  
What good thing shall I do that I may have E-  
ternal Life? 17. And he said unto him, why*



ESSAY callest thou me Good? there is none Good but  
 III. one, that is God. But if thou wilt enter in-  
 ~~~~~ to Life; keep the Commandments. 18. He  
 saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou  
 shalt do no Murder, Thou shalt not commit A-  
 dultery, Thou shalt not Steal, Thou shalt not  
 bear false Witnefs. 19. Honour thy Father  
 and thy Mother, and thou shalt love thy Neigh-  
 bour as thy self. 20. The young Man saith  
 unto him, all these have I kept from my Youth  
 up: what lack I yet? 21. Jesus said unto  
 him, if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that  
 thou hast and give to the Poor, and thou shalt  
 have Treasure in Heaven; and come and fol-  
 low me. 22. But when the young Man heard  
 that Saying, he went away sorrowful, for he  
 had great Possessions. 23. Then said Jesus un-  
 to his Disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a  
 Rich Man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom  
 of Heaven. This is the History.

The Person who address'd the Lord Jesus  
 Christ here, was a young Man, and wealthy,  
 as this sacred Writer informs us; and that he  
 was a Ruler among the Jews, St. Luke gives  
 us notice, Luke xviii. 18. That he was either  
 a Pharisee, or at least one of the stricter sort  
 of the Jews, seems evident, because he sought  
 after Eternal Life, whereas the Sadducees de-  
 ny'd a future State, many of the higher as  
 well as the looser Part of the Nation disre-  
 garded it. He appears leaven'd with the com-  
 mon Pharisaical Doctrine, (*viz.*) that the  
 way

way to *procure Eternal Life* was by his own *good Works*, by *doing some good Thing*. ESSAY III.

'Tis probable he had heard of the Miracles and the Fame of our Blessed Lord, and believed him to be a Teacher sent from God, for he comes in an humble manner as to a divine Prophet, he seems to be in good earnest in the Question which he puts to *Christ*, and seriously concerned about the Welfare of his Soul. He did not come with a Design to ensnare *Christ* in his Words, as that sort of Men (*viz.*) the *Pharisees* often did: Nor did he come with useless perplexing Questions, as the *Scribes* and *Sadducees* and *Lawyers* sometimes had done: But, as *St. Mark* relates the History, he shew'd some Tokens of Sincerity. *Mark* x. 17. for *He came running to Jesus* with Diligence and Speed, longing to have the Opinion of a new Prophet about a Matter of such Importance, as the obtaining of *Eternal Life*: *He kneeled down to him*, and paid our Saviour much civil Respect: He received the Directions of *Christ* with Attention, and when he found in his Heart that his Love to his Riches would not let him comply with the Terms proposed, *he went away sorrowful*. There was something in his Design and in his Deportment, that was lovely and amiable, and we find that our Saviour (as a Man) looked on him with a Love of Complacency, *Mark* x. 21. But he was not so zealous a

ESSAY Lover of God to part with Earth for Heaven.  
III.

~~~~~ We may suppose this young Gentleman, who seems to be a Follower or Disciple of the *Pharisees*, might probably have one or more of these three Designs in his Question. (*viz.*)

I. Whereas the Law of *Moses* promises long Life in the Land of *Canaan*, and the Blessings of this World to those that are obedient to the Statutes and Ordinances which God enjoin'd to *Israel*; but it scarce ever mentions, plainly and expressly, any Promises of Eternal Life in another World, nor the Methods to attain it; and whereas this Youth was fully convinced from several of the Writings of the Prophets, that there was a future State and eternal Happiness in another World to be obtained, he comes now to *Jesus*, as a new and divine Teacher, to seek an Answer to this *Question about Eternal Life*, which he could not find an express Answer to in the Law of *Moses*; and he would fain know whether he must obtain Eternal Life the same way that he was to seek for a long Life on Earth, and Temporal Blessings, namely, by an outward Obedience to the Laws already given to the *Jews*.

II. We may suppose him enquiring after some shorter and more compendious way to Eternal Life, by practising some one or two extraordinary Instances of Duty, and thereby  
to



to atone for the neglect of the rest. This ESSAY was an Error that prevailed among the *Pharisees* in our Saviour's Time, as seems to be sufficiently evident from their Doctrine, as it is represented, Matt. xv. 5, 6. *Whosoever shall make a great Present to God and his Temple (as some interpret the Word Corban, or a Gift) he shall be free from all relative Duties to Parents, &c.* So Matt. xxiii. 23. if they did but *pay Tythes* duly to the Priest they might be saved, tho' they neglected the *weighty Matters of the Law, Justice, Judgment and Mercy, and the Love of God.* So the *Pharisee* that went into the Temple to pray, *he fasted twice a-week, and gave Tythes of all that he possessed,* and he accounted himself Righteous. *Luke xviii. 12.*

And upon this account you find the Question proposed elsewhere to our Saviour, Matt. xxii. 36. *Which is the great Commandment of the Law?* Some were for *Circumcision*, as a most ancient Precept, and therefore of the most general Obligation: Some for the *Sabbath*, because it was so strictly enjoined to the *Jews*: And some for *Sacrifice*, as being in their Opinion a sufficient Expiation and Atonement for any other Defects whatsoever. They thought one or other of these to be the critical Points on which Salvation depended.

And generally we find that the Commands of God, of an external or *Ceremonial* Nature,

ESSAY ture, or the mere Inventions and Traditions

III. of Men, were thus aggrandized by the Teachers of the *Jews*, as though Heaven might be obtain'd in a short way, by practising those Formalities, without the long Labours of Watchfulness and Abstinence from Sin, and Obedience to every moral Command of the Law. Yet we must suppose this Person to be one of the better sort of them too, for he had endeavoured to keep the *Moral Law*, (at least in the outward and visible Duties of it) as well as *Ceremonial*, even from his Youth up, as he tells our Saviour.

III. Or we may suppose this young Man hearing the Fame of *Christ*, as the great Prophet that was to come into the World, might expect some new and unheard-of Doctrines, some new and unknown way to Heaven, which the Law and the Old Prophets had never spoken of; especially since he thought he had already fulfilled all that they had required: And therefore he came running to *Christ*, kneeling down with earnest Desire to be taught this new Revelation, this Method of obtaining Heaven and eternal Life, which the new Prophet was sent to teach: And perhaps he might imagine *Jesus* to be the *Messiah*: And they knew that *when the Messiah came he would teach them all things*, which all the former Prophets and *Moses* himself had not fully acquainted them with, *John* iv. 25.

Or

Or may we not suppose all these three De-ESSAY  
signs together, to be in the Heart of this III.

young Querist? As if he should say, " Good  
" Master, *Moses* in his five Books, hath  
" spoken much of Life, *long Life* in the  
" Land of Promise, but hath not given us  
" an expresse Account of *Life Eternal* in the  
" other World, nor prescribed the special  
" Methods to attain it; I would therefore  
" fain learn that of thee. And whereas the  
" Statutes and Ceremonies, and Commands  
" and Judgments, and Duties of the Law,  
" are very numerous and difficult, is there  
" no one good thing that may be as accepta-  
" ble to God as all the rest, and give me a  
" Title to eternal Happiness, in a short and  
" compendious manner? Or is there any  
" new way to Heaven which thou discover-  
" est to Men? As thou seemest to preach up  
" a future State, a Heaven and a Hell in  
" the other World, dost thou come to give  
" any new Directions how to avoid this Hell,  
" and obtain this Heaven?"

Our Lord, before he answered his Que-  
stion, takes Occasion to ask him, *why he*  
*called him Good*, which was a Title that emi-  
nently belonged to God only: The best con-  
jecture that Interpreters can make of this  
Query, is this, (*viz.*) *Jesus* searched into  
his Opinion concerning himself, whether he  
knew or believed that he was the *Messiah* or  
the Son of God, who was *one with the Father*,  
and



ESSAY and thereby had a Right to Divine Titles

III. and Characters, and might justly be called

~ Good in a Divine Sense. Perhaps *Jesus* might have, before this time, manifested this his own *Oneness with God*; but if he had not, yet there were several Descriptions of the *Messiah* in the Old Testament, wherein the Names and Titles of the true God are given to the *Messiah*, which could not be given him without such a *Oneness with God*, and therefore he might justly take Occasion to catechise such a forward young Man who seemed to be conceited of his own Righteousness, &c. 'Tis as if *Jesus* had said, "Thou callest me *Good*: There is none originally, eternally and perfectly good but God himself; none good as God is; none hath right to the Title in the most absolute and exalted Sense of it but God: Why then dost thou use this Salutation to me, and give me this Title? Dost thou think any thing more than Human dwells in me?" "Hast thou known or observed any of those Speeches or those Miracles of mine, whereby I have asserted and proved that *I am in the Father and the Father in me*, or, that *I am one with the Father*, and so partake with him in the Title of *Good*?" See *John* x. 30, 37, 38. and 14, 8, 9, 10.

Here it may be remarked, that our Saviour did not use to publish his own Divinity or *Oneness with God*, in plain and express Terms

Terms to the People, but generally by such ESSAY Methods of Enquiry and Insinuation. See III. *Mark* ii. 5.—11. where he had forgiven the Sins of a Man that was sick of the Palsy before he healed him; and then he proves by the Miracle of healing, that he had a Right to forgive Sin, while the *Jews* acknowledge that none could forgive Sins but God alone. So *John* x. 30.—36. after he had given a hint of his Deity, by saying, *I and my Father are one*, the *Jews* would have stoned him for pretending to be God; which he answers by such an Enquiry; Since those are called Gods in Scripture, *to whom the Word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the World, he blasphemeth, because I said I am the Son of God?* Such a sort of oblique Insinuation, or Enquiry concerning the Divinity of his Person, seems to be our Lord's Design in this Text. If this be not the Purport and Intention of this Question, I must confess I am ignorant of the Design of it. But this seems to me the most probable Conjecture.

Then immediately he proceeds to give our young Querist an Answer to his Question, *If thou wilt enter into Life keep the Commandments.*

The young Man again seems to have his former Designs in his Eye, when he asks *which Commandment he should keep?* As if he should say, “ Is it any one particular Com-  
“ mandment

ESSAY "mandment or Commandments of *Moses*

III. "that I must keep? and if I have kept

~ "them, is there any new Commandment  
 "thou wilt give me, whereby eternal Life  
 "will be insured to me?"

Our Lord replies, Keep the common Commandments of the Law, *Thou knowest them*, as Mark x. 17. 'Tis not by observing any one Command and neglecting the rest, but the way to enter into Life is Obedience to all the old Commandments, for *I am not come to break or dissolve the Law of God, but to confirm or fulfil it*, Matt. v. 17, 19. And though our Lord *Jesus* mentions only those of the second Table, and the Duties towards *Men*, yet we must suppose he means inclusively all the rest; for he saith in Matt. v. 19. *Whosoever shall teach Men to break the least of the Commandments of the Law, shall be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven*, i. e. shall have no Place there. Our Saviour doth not give a Dispensation to neglect Duties toward God, by mentioning only the Duties toward our Neighbour; but the Reason why he mentions them seem chiefly these two.

I. Because these Duties to their *Neighbours* were those which the *Pharisees*, who boasted of their own Righteousness, more particularly neglected, while they pretended to much Devotion and Worship of God in all the Forms of his Appointment: And therefore our Lord insists particularly upon these Commands that relate to our fellow Creatures,



tures, to shew him that these were as necessary a Part of his Duty, as all the more pompous Services of God in his Temple. ESSAY III.

2. Because it might be more easy for his own Conscience to convince him of the Neglect of these moral and relative Duties towards his Fellow-Creatures, than of his Neglect of religious Duties towards God: And our Saviour thought when he had named these, he had named Commandments enough to shew him the Imperfection of his Righteousness: Therefore he don't proceed to mention them all.

And it may be noted, that our Lord reckons up these Commands not in their exact Order, nor exactly in the Words of the Old Testament, but with a more loose and negligent way of repeating them, because he spoke to a Man that was supposed to know them already: *Thou knowest all the Commandments* which I refer to, even the Commands of the moral Law, *Do not kill, do not steal, &c.*

## S E C T. II.

### *The Sense of Christ's Answer.*

Now the great and important Question comes naturally into Sight: In what Sense did our Saviour speak these Words to the young Enquirer, *If thou wilt enter into Life keep the Commandments?* Did he design to give

ESSAY give him a plain and direct Answer how he  
 III. might obtain Eternal Life and Salvation, according to the *Gospel*? or did he design only to convince him of Sin, by preaching the *Law* to him, in order to make him see his Guilt and Misery, that he might seek after a better Righteousness than that of the Works of the Law, another way of obtaining Acceptance with God and Eternal Life, than merely by his own Doings?

I answer, the last of these seems to be the Design of *Christ*. He did not intend in these Words to give him immediate and direct Instruction, how he might actually obtain Salvation, but rather first to convince him of Sin, &c. and I would offer these following Reasons for it.

1. *Reason*. The Answer of *Christ* is exactly suited to his Question. Now his Question was about *Eternal Life to be obtain'd by Works*, and not about the *Salvation of a Sinner* by the *Mercy* of God. He did not ask, as the convinced Jaylor, Acts xvi. 30. *What shall I do to be saved*, or to obtain Salvation? But *What good Work must I do to obtain Eternal Life by it?*

It is granted that *Eternal Life* is sometimes put for the final Happiness of Believers under the Gospel, because it is included in the Salvation of *Christ*; yet *Life* and *Eternal Life* are peculiarly and properly the Blessings promised in the Law of Works, in which Sense

the Word *Salvation* is never used; and the Scripture in some Places by this way of Expression makes this Distinction evident. See the Terms of the *Law* or Covenant of Works, both in its *Command* and its *Reward*, as it is described in direct opposition to the *Gospel*, and Method of Salvation, in Rom. x. 5, 6. *Moses describeth the Righteousness which is of the Law, that the Man who doth these Things shall live by them*; whereas the *Righteousness of Faith* (i. e. the way of Justification and Acceptance with God by the Gospel) says quite other things, *If thou shalt believe and confess Christ, &c.* So St. Paul describes the promised Blessings of the Law of Works in the same manner in his Epistle to the Galatians, Gal. iii. 12. *The Law is not of Faith, but the Man who doth them shall live in them.* Life is still the Word of the Promise. And in Rom. ii. 6, 7. where the Apostle is properly preaching the Law of Works with the Terms of it, 'tis called *Immortality, Eternal Life*, to be obtained by *continuance in good Works* or *well-doing*.

'Tis this *Eternal Life* and *Immortality* which was imply'd in the Covenant of Works which God made with *Adam*. If he eat the forbidden Fruit he should *die*; but if he observed the Commands of God, he should *live*; and the *Tree of Life* in the midst of the Garden was a Symbol or Sacrament of *Life* and *Immortality* to seal this



ESSAY Promise to Man, if he continued in his O-  
 III. bedience to God.

Our Lord therefore gives an Answer exactly according to the Question, *What good Thing shall I do for Eternal Life?* saith the Enquirer. *Keep the Commandments,* saith our Lord. When the young Man proposes his Question about final Happiness in the Terms and Language of the Covenant of Works, our Lord gives an Answer in the same Language. "If thou wilt obtain Life by doing Works, these are the Works which thou must do, even the Works of the moral Law."

2. *Reason.* I suppose *Jesus Christ* the chief Minister of the Covenant of Grace would not give this Direction to obtain the Salvation and Benefits thereof, because 'tis the most direct Answer which a Preacher of the Covenant of Works could give to this same Enquiry; *If thou wilt enter into Life keep the Commandments.* And this is very different from the Terms of Justification and Salvation by the Gospel, which exclude the Works of the Law, as the way to Pardon and Justification, and refer us to *Faith in Jesus Christ.* See *Gal. iii. 11, 12. Rom. x. 5, 6.* already cited. Is it not most expressly asserted, that *by the Works of the Law no Flesh shall be justified?* *Rom. iii. 19, 20.* Are not these Works perpetually excluded by the blessed Apostle, whensoever he is describing the

the mere Method of Grace and Salvation, or the Means for a Sinner to obtain his Acceptance with God unto Eternal Life? See Rom. iv. ESSAY III.

4. *To him that worketh the Reward is not reckon'd of Grace but of Debt: But to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly (i. e. the Man who has no Works of Righteousness answerable to any Law) his Faith is counted for Righteousness. Gal. ii. 16. Knowing that a Man is not justify'd by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Christ, &c. See Gal. iii. 8, 12.*

And it is plain, that it is not merely the Law of Levitical Ceremonies that the Apostle speaks of, when he excludes the Works of it from our Justification, for it is also that Law which is written by Nature in the Hearts and Consciences of the Gentiles, Rom. ii. 14, 15. It is the Law that forbids Stealing and Adultery, Rom. ii. 21, 22. The Law that forbids Coveting, Rom. vii. 6, 7. even this very Law, and those Commandments which our Saviour makes mention of in my Text. 'Tis by the Works of this Law no Flesh shall be justified, no Man shall be saved, or obtain Eternal Happiness, Rom. iii. 20. Now can we suppose that Christ, the great Messenger of God to sinful Man, and the Prophet of the Gospel or Covenant of Grace, would give the very same Advice and Direction to a Sinner how to obtain Salvation, which a Preacher of the Law, or

ESSAY a Zealot for the Covenant of Works, would  
 III. give to one who thought himself Righteous,  
 and never confessed himself a Sinner, but  
 enquired about obtaining Life by his good  
 Works?

3. *Reason.* 'Tis hardly to be thought that *Christ* should direct a Man to fulfil the Commands of the Moral Law as the proper way for him to obtain Eternal Life, when thro' the Weakness of our sinful Nature, he knew the Law could not give Life to Men in their fallen Estate, and he himself was sent to provide another way for them to obtain Life. Rom. viii. 10. *What the Law could not do in that it was weak thro' the Flesh, God sent his own Son to do for us.* Rom. iii. 20. *By the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight.* This does not arise from any Weakness or Insufficiency of the Law itself, for it still promises Life, and would secure it to any Man who was perfect without Sin. But as the Apostle says, *'Tis become weak thro' the Flesh, i. e.* because Man is so much immersed in Flesh and Sin, that he cannot perfectly fulfil it. The Law cannot give the Favour of God and Eternal Life, because Man cannot obey it.

And upon this Account *the Law* of ten Commands which was engraven in Stones is called *the Ministration of Condemnation and Death*, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9. and not the *Ministration of Life and Righteousness*; that



is the peculiar Glory of the Gospel. *The* ESSAY  
*Law* indeed *is holy and just and good*, and it III.  
 was originally ordained *for Life* to innocent  
 Man: But when the Apostle *Paul* came to  
 have his Conscience awaken'd to a Sense of  
 Sin by the Law, he found it to *be unto*  
*Death*, Rom. vii. 10. partly by shewing  
 him his Imperfection of Obedience, as well  
 as by irritating his indwelling sinful Inclina-  
 tions. So far is the Law from giving Life  
 to Sinners.

God honours his Laws so much that the  
 Scripture assures us, *If there had been a Law*  
*which could have given Life*, Eternal Life,  
*verily Righteousness*, Justification and Hap-  
 piness *should have come by the Law*. Gal. iii.  
 21, 22. *But the Scripture hath concluded all*  
*under Sin*, and condemned them by the  
 Law, and has shewn the Insufficiency of the  
 Law to save, *that the Promise* of Eternal  
 Life *by Faith of Jesus Christ* might be given to  
*them that believe*. 'Tis not to be supposed  
 therefore, that *Jesus Christ* the Son of God,  
 who was sent into this World to give or  
 further reveal *this Promise* of Eternal Life  
*by Faith*, and to provide another way to  
 Salvation and Eternal Life for fallen Man,  
 because the Law was unable to give it; I  
 say, 'tis not to be supposed that this ve-  
 ry Son of God should preach Obedience  
 to the Commands of this Law, as the  
 proper and direct way for a Sinner to obtain  
 Salvation or Eternal Life. This would be

ESSAY like *building up again* the Hopes of Sinners  
 III. to obtain Salvation by the Law, *which* Hopes  
 he came to destroy, and to provide a much  
 surer Foundation for Hope.

4. *Reason.* 'Tis much more probable that  
*Christ* in these Words design'd to lead this  
 young Man to a Sense of Sin and Guilt, and  
 Self-Condernation, by preaching to him  
 the Law of God, rather than to give him  
 immediately the direct and plain Advice  
 how a Sinner might obtain Eternal Happi-  
 ness; for this is a Work which the Law  
 can do, even in our fallen State: For *by the*  
*Law is the Knowledge of Sin*, Rom. iii. 20,  
 and vii. 7. The Law can convince and con-  
 demn, though it cannot justify and save.  
 Our Saviour knew the Hearts of Men; he  
 knew this young Man was conceited of his  
 own Righteousness, and he had a mind to  
 lead his Conscience to a Sight and Sense of  
 the Imperfection of his Obedience, and there-  
 fore he preaches the Law to him in many  
 of the express Commands of it, for that  
 very End which the Law might attain, *i. e.*  
*Conviction of Sin and Self-Condernation.*  
 This is the first thing necessary in order to  
 the Salvation of Men, and therefore our Sa-  
 viour begins with it.

And 'tis well worthy our Notice, that the  
 publick Promulgation of the ten Command-  
 ments, with such solemn Terrors at Mount  
*Sinai*, was design'd, in the spiritual Inten-  
 tion

tion of it, to lay the Consciences of Men under Guilt, rather than to make them partakers of Righteousness and Life, *Rom. v. 20.* ESSAY III.

*The Law enter'd that the Offence might abound, i. e. that the Sins of Men might appear to be great and numerous, beyond what their carnal Imaginations would have supposed, without the express Letter of the Law, which forbids coveting, &c. The Apostle Paul tells us, Rom. vii. 7. He had not known this Concupiscence to be Sin but by the Law; and that useful Expofitor of Scripture, Mr. Samuel Clark, (who is not wont to be too Evangelical in his Expositions) remarks on Exod. xix. 24. " That the Charge " of forbidding the People to come near " Mount Sinai, is often repeated, lest God " break forth upon them, to shew that the " End of the Law is rather to exclude Men " from God, by reason of their Sins, than " to justify or to give Life; for which he " cites, 2 Cor. iii. 7. Gal. iii. 10—24."*

And indeed this was one considerable part of the Design and Business of our Saviour's personal Ministry here upon Earth, (*viz.*) *to preach the Law of God in its Perfection, and convince Men of Sin,* to let them see that they were condemned and exposed to the Wrath of God, that they might learn the Necessity of a Saviour to atone for Sin, and of the Mercy of God to pardon it. He described the Purity and Exactness of the



ESSAY Law, not only to teach his Disciples and all

III. succeeding Christians, that their Obedience to the Law of God ought to be more exact and pure, more inward and spiritual, than what the *Pharisees* required or practised, but also to shew Men the Imperfection of their best Righteousness, and that they were all guilty before God, that he might prepare them to receive the Gospel, partly by his own preaching it, and especially when it should be published in greater Brightness and Clearness, and in its full Glory, after his Resurrection.

Was not this one great Design of his Sermon upon the Mount, where he explains the Law of God in its Lengths and Breadths, and shews that it reaches to the Thoughts of Men as well as their Actions? Did he not begin this Sermon with, *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit*, Matt. v. 3. that he might shew the way to Blessedness was not a *Self-Sufficiency of Soul*, and a *Trust* in our own Righteousness, but a *spiritual Poverty*, i.e. a humble Sense of our own Weakness and Sinfulness? What mean many of his Parables, particularly that of the *prodigal Son* returning in Rags and Sorrow to his Father's House? Doth it not teach us that the way to be accepted of our heavenly Father is to return to him with a deep Sense of our Disobedience, Sin and Misery, with a humble Repentance, and asking Forgiveness?

What

What is the Intent of the Parable of the *Pharisee and Publican going up to pray?* Is *III.*

it not to shew us that a humble, confessing, repenting Sinner seeking for Mercy, is much nearer to Justification and the Favour of God, than a Man who spreads abroad his own Righteousness and justifies himself? What means our Blessed Lord in his perpetual Reproofs of the *Pharisees* who *trusted in themselves that they were righteous?* Did he not frequently talk thus to convince Men of Sin, and shew them how imperfect their Obedience was, and how insufficient to procure Acceptance with God, and to let them see that Repentance and Confession of Sin, and Trust in Divine Mercy, were the only way to Salvation.

'Tis no wonder then if our Saviour had the same Design in his Eye when he saw a rich young Man of a *Pharisaical* Spirit, come to enquire the way to Heaven by *doing some good Work*; 'tis no wonder that he begun to talk to him of Obedience to the Law, in order to convince him of Sin, and shew him that he was not sufficiently righteous to obtain Eternal Life by his Righteousness.

'Tis most likely that our Blessed Lord had a special Intention in this Place to try the young Man, whether he knew his own State and Case as a Sinner who wanted Pardon, and whether he was prepared for the Gospel

ESSAY Gospel or no: Whether he stood convinced  
 III. of Sin, and desirous of true Salvation, such  
 as *Christ* came to procure for those who were  
 sensible of their Guilt and Danger. I have  
 before shewed that the first Sentence that  
*Christ* spoke to him was with design to try  
 his Opinion about himself, the *Messiah*,  
 when he called him *Good*, whether he was  
 one with God or no: And now he tries his  
 Opinion about the inward and spiritual Per-  
 fection of the Law, and about his own  
 Power to keep it, and about his own Hope  
 of Justification thereby: And therefore he  
 at first gives him such an Answer as should  
 make him bethink himself, whether he had  
 obey'd the Law of God perfectly or no.

If he had found him sensible of his Guilt  
 and his Imperfections, then most probably  
 the compassionate *Jesus* would have preach-  
 ed to him the pardoning Grace of the Gospel,  
 which he came to offer to those who repent  
 of Sin, and believe in the Saviour. But  
 when he heard the vain Enquirer justify  
 himself as a righteous Man, and say, *All  
 these Commands have I kept from my Youth*,  
 then our Saviour put him to a fresh and more  
 painful Trial of his Sincerity and Obedience  
 to God, and that partly for his Conviction,  
 instead of saying, *Repent and believe*; he did  
 not proceed so far as to preach Repentance  
 to him, because he saw him so much uncon-  
 vinced of Sin; and he tells us that he came

not



not to call these righteous Men but Sinners to Repentance, Matt. ix. 13. i. e. those who own themselves to be Sinners. ESSAY  
III.

This leads me to the *fifth* or last Reason, to prove that this Answer was not designed by *Christ* as a Direction of the Querist how to obtain Salvation, (*viz.*) It is a quite different Answer to the like Questions that is given by *Christ*, and by the Apostles, when they designed to preach the Gospel in plain, direct and express Language, Mark i. 15. *Christ* saith Repent and believe the Gospel. John vi. 40. *This is the Will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him, hath everlasting Life.* And again, *This is the Work of God, i. e. the great Work which God now requires, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent,* John vi. 28, 29. So preaches St. Peter, Acts ii. 38. *Repent and be baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ:* So Paul, Acts xvi. 31. *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved:* And so John speaks, *This is his Commandment that ye believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ,* 1 John iii. 23. These are the plain and direct Advices of *Christ* and his Apostles to sinful Men, in order to obtain the Favour of God and Eternal Life.

To suppose therefore that *Christ* did in this Place, and in these Words, direct the Enquirer into the proper way of Salvation by the Gospel, is to suppose that *Christ* differed

ESSAY fer'd greatly from himself, in the Directions

III. he gave, how Men might be saved; and that he and his Apostles, and particularly *St. Paul*, taught very different Doctrines; that *Christ* taught the way to Salvation by the Works of the Law, and the Gospel taught it by Faith and Repentance, without the Works of the Law. But this would set *Christ* and his Apostles so much at Variance with themselves, that 'tis not to be admitted.

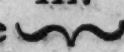
### S E C T. III.

#### *An Answer to some Objections.*

I come now to answer some *Objections* against my Sense of this Text, and the chief of them are taken from *Dr. Whitby*, a most ingenious Writer on that Side.

*Object. 1.* Doth not *Christ* say, that *to love the Lord our God is the Way to Life*, Luke x. 27, 28? Is not this the same thing in effect, as when he directs the young Man to Eternal Life, by *keeping the Commandments*, and that in the same Language? For when the Lawyer enquires, *What shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?* *Jesus* gives him this Advice, *Love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and thy Neighbour as thy self: This do and thou shalt live.* Thus Eternal Life is promised by *Christ* himself, to our loving God and Man, which is the Epitome or Abstract of all the moral Commands in one,  
for

for *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*, Rom. ESSAY  
xiii. 8, 10. III.

*Ans. 1.* It is very plain that in that Place  our Saviour is preaching the Covenant of Works, as well as in my Text, and that for the same Purpose too, (*viz.*) for the Conviction of Sin. This Lawyer was not a humble and sincere Enquirer, but one who came to tempt and ensnare him; and then 'tis no wonder if *Jesus* did not give him a plain and direct Answer according to the Method of Salvation by the Gospel. And though he directed others to believe and repent, yet he did not treat a vain young *Pharisee*, who thought himself righteous, and a cunning Lawyer who design'd to insnare him, in the same manner that he would treat Persons who were sensible of their Sins, and sought the way to obtain Pardon and Happiness, nor did he give them the same Directions.

*Ans. 2.* Let it be further consider'd, that the Life-time of *Christ* was not the appointed Season to speak the Glories of the Gospel in the fullest and plainest Language, as I hinted before. His frequent Business and Practice was to preach the Law, to reprove Sin, and prepare Men for the fuller and more compleat Ministry of the Gospel, which after his Death he sent his Apostles to preach by the Power of his own Spirit: And they publish'd the Gospel of Salvation  
by



ESSAY by Repentance and Faith in the Blood of

III. *Christ*, and Forgiveness through his Atonement, much plainer and clearer, and fuller than *Christ* himself did in his Life-time among the Multitudes. That Gospel which he taught them secretly, *they proclaimed* as it were *upon the House Tops*, according to his Order, *Matt. x. 27.*

Though *Christ* himself gave such Hints of this Gospel in his preaching, as were sufficient for Salvation to those that would receive them, yet he might be said to be sent rather with this dreadful Commission to the Generality of the *Jews*, *Matt. xiii. 13. Isa. vi. 10. Make the Heart of this People fat and their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, &c.* They were such a stubborn and self-conceited and disobedient People, that God justly gave them up to their own Blindness and Hardness: And for this Reason our Saviour spake often the great things of the Gospel to them in Parables \*. He was ordained to be a *stumbling Stone and Rock of Offence to the House of Israel and Judah*, *Esa. viii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 8.* and this by the just Judgment of God, for their stoning the Prophets, and murdering the former Messengers of Heaven, for their forsaking the Law of God, and making it void by their Traditions, and for their violent Opposition to *Christ* his Son. *Christ* was not always

\* See Sect. 5. Reflexion. 1.

always bound to speak the Gospel to this ESSAY  
 People in as plain Words as he could, for III.  
 Reasons that the Wisdom of God was well  
 acquainted with, Reasons that the Justice  
 of God righteously determined, and the  
 Goodness of God did not think fit to oppose.  
 And 'tis no wonder at all that he doth speak  
 in this way to those Men who came with  
 curious Questions and with evil Purposes to  
 ensnare him, as the Lawyer did in this Ac-  
 count of St. *Luke*.

*Obj. 2.* But can we suppose that *Christ*  
 would deceive a young Man, who came se-  
 riously to enquire the way to Eternal Life?  
 Can we imagine that *Christ*, in whom dwells  
 all Wisdom, Truth and Love, should give  
 such Directions as could never bring a Man  
 to Heaven, and especially considering that  
 he came into the World on purpose to bring  
*Life and Immortality to Light* among Men,  
 and to shew them the true way to Heaven?

*Ans. 1.* That we may secure the Good-  
 ness of God and the Mercy of *Christ* from  
 any Reproach in this Case, I say further,  
 that *Christ* did take a very wise and regular  
 Method with this young Man to bring him  
 to Salvation, if he would have stay'd to at-  
 tend to it, and had not been full of evil Pre-  
 judices, of Self Righteousness, and the Love  
 of this World. For the first thing to be  
 done in order to bring Sinners to Heaven  
 (as I hinted before) is to convince them of  
 Sin,

ESSAY Sin, and this is done by the Law. This the  
 III. Apostle *Paul* sheweth at large in his Epistle  
 to the *Romans*, that Men by beholding the  
 Perfection of the Law, and their Inability to  
 perform it, might become *Dead to all Hope  
 from the Law*, as he was when he says, Gal.  
 ii. 19. *I by the Law am dead to the Law*;  
 and that they might not expect Life by the  
 Law, but that they might seek for Salva-  
 tion by the way of Repentance and Faith,  
 or Trust in *Christ*, and obtain Forgiveness of  
 Sins thro' the free Grace of God in the  
 Gospel.

*Ans. 2.* Tho' this young Man had a vain  
 Conceit of his own Righteousness, yet there  
 was something in him naturally pleasing, a-  
 greeable and engaging, so that *Christ* as  
 Man looked upon him and loved him, Mark x.  
 21. He had some liking to such a towardly  
 and hopeful Youth, and preach'd the Law  
 to him, to convince him of Sin, in order to  
 his Salvation: But when he professed him-  
 self to be so righteous in his own Eyes, as  
 to have kept all the Commands of the Law,  
 his divine Wisdom then saw it proper to  
 put a harder Trial upon him (*viz.*) to sell all  
 that he had and give to the Poor, and to be-  
 come a Follower of *Christ*. Now if this  
 young Man had loved God so well as he  
 pretended, and believed *Christ* to be a Pro-  
 phet come from God, he ought to have  
 obey'd him, even in this difficult and self-  
 denying



denying Command; which Command was **ESSAY** put upon him, partly to convince him that **III.** he did not love God so well as he imagined, and which hard Trial probably would never have been put upon him, if he had not been so conceited of his own Righteousness.

It must be observed also, to vindicate the Honour, Faithfulness and Goodness of *Christ*, that if the young Man had followed these Directions of *Christ* at the End of the Conference, he had been saved: Our Blessed Lord gave him sufficient Advice for Eternal Life, if he would have taken it. "Come, *sell what thou hast, and give it to the Poor, and follow me*, and be my Disciple;" and then it would follow, "Thou shalt learn of me the way to Heaven more perfectly, and I will teach thee the way of Repentance, and Faith, and Holiness unto compleat Salvation." But the young Man loved his Money, and went away sorrowful, that he could not keep all his Riches and obtain Eternal Life too.

*Obj.* 3. Doth not God all along in the Writings of the Old Testament, in successive Ages, promise *Life* in this same sort of Language to those that observe and do his Commandments, and that, both by *Moses* and by the *Prophets*? And did not the Saints, under the Old Testament, obtain Life this way? Lev. xviii. 5. *He that doth them* (that is the Commands of God) *shall live in them*,

K

Ezek.

ESSAY Ezek. xx. 11. this Promise is repeated:

III. And in Ezek. xxx. 15. *If the Wicked walk in the Statutes of Life, without committing Iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die:* Now this dying cannot mean a natural Death, for they knew they must die Naturally; therefore it must mean a Deliverance from Eternal Death, and Assurance of Eternal Life.

“ ’Tis therefore certain, that all  
 “ pious Persons, under the Old Testament,  
 “ obtain’d a Right to Life eternal, by this  
 “ Observance of the moral Precepts of the  
 “ Law.” These are Dr. *Whitby’s* own Words.

*Ans.* 1. This Life which is here promised in these Texts to the *Jews*, in a literal Sense, chiefly means long Life in their own Land, and Peace and Freedom from Sorrows and Miseries in this World: And tho’ the Freedom or Preservation from Death (which is promised by *Moses* to those who keep the Statutes, Laws and Ordinances enjoin’d to *Israel*) does not mean an intire Preservation from Temporal Death; so neither in the obvious and literal Sense does it mean a Security from Eternal Death, but rather a Freedom from Death, as it is a general Term used to include all temporal and painful Evils, and particularly from sudden and violent Death, from cruel, lingering and shameful Death, from Death in foreign Countries, and untimely Death in the midst of their Years.

Years. This is very evident, if you read *ESSAY* those Expressions of *Moses*, *Deut.* vi. 24, III. 25. and *Deut.* xxx. 15 — 30. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 10, 15. So *Solomon*, in his Prayer, *1 Kings* viii. 31, — 50. *Nebemiah*, in his Prayer, *Neb.* ix. 29 — 31. teach us to explain it. *Life* is put for all that is good, and *Death* for all that is Evil.

'Tis evident that God governed the *Jews* with regard to temporal Blessings and temporal Curses, in the way of a Covenant of Works. As to the external and temporal State of their Persons, their Church, and their Nation, they were under a Covenant of Works; and God, who was their King or political Head, dealt with them from time to time in saving them, or in punishing them according to their Works: And 'tis very observable, that 'tis this very Promise of *Life*, upon condition of *doing the Works* of the Law which the Apostle takes to describe that *Covenant of Works*, by which the *Jews* could not be saved as to their eternal State, see *Rom.* x. 3, 5. and ix. 31. *The Man that doth them shall live in them.*

If it be *objected*, that God allow'd of their Repentance for Sin in this his Law or Covenant as their King, and sometimes he saved the Nation upon their Repentance, and therefore it must include the *Gospel* or *Covenant of Grace*; yet I answer, it may still be called a *Covenant of Works*, because



ESSAY a mere external visible Humiliation and Re-

III.

formation, without a real Penitence at Heart, was accepted by God as their King, as sufficient to divert Divine Judgments from the Nation, and sometimes from particular Persons, who had provoked God's Anger by external and visible Iniquities. 1 Kings xxi. 2. *Seest thou how Akab humbleth himself? I will not bring this Evil in his Days;* whereas all his Humiliation was his *rending his Clothes, wearing of Sackcloth and Fasting*, and a little outward Appearance of Reformation, but 'tis evident that his Heart was not changed. See 1 Kings xxii. 27.

It may be granted, indeed, there was much Grace and Mercy mingled in this Political Law or Covenant of Life, between God as a Civil King, and *Israel* as his Subjects in this World; but still this was not the Gospel or Covenant of Grace and Salvation, whereby the pious *Jews* were saved from the Wrath of God, as their Spiritual Lord and Ruler in the other World, and whereby they had their Sins pardoned, and were made Partakers of Eternal Life; for the Rites of the Law could not cleanse the Conscience from Sin in the Sight of God. *Heb.* ix. 9. and this leads me to the next Answer.

*Ans.* 2. Besides the frequent Charges which are given to the *Jews* to keep the Commandments of God, in order to obtain Life,

Life, we find also frequent Calls to in-ward and hearty *Repentance of Sin*, to make *their Hearts clean*, to *forsake their evil Thoughts*, to *rend their Hearts and not their Garments*, and so *trust in the pardoning Mercy of God*; and there are many Promises of Pardon to the Penitent, and the Favour of God *to those that fear him and hope his Mercy*, in order to lead them to obtain the Happiness of the other World and Eternal Life. See Esa. lv. 7, 8. *Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.* Ps. cxxx. 4, &c. *There is Forgiveness with thee that thou may'st be feared. Let Israel hope in the Lord; with the Lord is plentiful Redemption. He shall redeem Israel from all his Iniquities.* One might transcribe many Pages to this Purpose out of *Isaiab, Jeremiab and David*. This is more Evangelical Language, shewing the Way for Sinners to obtain Salvation: *This is the Gospel that was preached to them as well as to us.* Heb. iv. 2. And even to them was preached also the Gospel of the *Messiah*, and the Salvation of Men *by the Messiah the Seed of Abraham*, Gal. iii. 8. Isa. liii. 5, 6, 11. *He was wounded for our Iniquities: The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all. And 'tis said, Acts x. 43. To him give all the*

ESSAY  
III.

ESSAY *Prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in*

III. *him shall receive Forgiveness of Sins thro' his Name.* Thus it plainly appears, that the mere keeping of the Commands, as written in the moral Law, was not the proper Term or Rule of their Acceptance with God unto Eternal Life, under the Old Testament: For there is nothing of this Doctrine of Repentance and Forgiveness, nor of the *Messiah*, contained in the Ten Commands.

Let it be observed also, that even in those legal Promises, which ensure *Life* to those who kept the Commands of God, there is a more Spiritual and Evangelical Sense sometimes imply'd: For under this Word *Life*, and these temporal Blessings which were promised, *Eternal Life* and eternal Blessings were typify'd and held forth to those that looked thro' the Veil, and that fulfilled the Will of God in spiritual and sincere Obedience, with an humble Sense of their Sins, and Trust in divine Forgiveness. But the Ground of their Acceptance with God unto Eternal Life, or their Right to Heaven and Salvation, was not this their Performance of the Works of the Law; for their best Works were all imperfect, and *they were saved by Faith even as we.* Gal. iii. 6 — c. i. e. by trusting to pardoning Mercy, so far as it was revealed under that Dispensation.



And as the *Salvation* itself was typify'd ESSAY  
 by temporal Blessings, so the way to this III.  
*Salvation*, which was *Repentance* and *Trust*  
*in the Mercy of God thro' the Messiah*, was  
 typify'd by offering Sacrifices of Blood, and  
 by many Washings and Purifyings, both  
 by Blood and Water, which implied a Con-  
 fession of their Defilement: And the Saints  
 or righteous Men of that Day, hoped for  
 the Mercy of God, as discover'd more plain-  
 ly in the Promises, and perhaps also, some  
 might understand it as hinted in these Types  
 and Figures. They knew that *Blessedness*  
*was to come upon Men to whom God imputed*  
*not their Sins*, or to whom *the Lord imputed*  
*Righteousness*, or accounted them as righte-  
 ous in his Sight by his Mercy, tho' they  
 were very imperfect, and far from Right-  
 eousness, *i. e.* a perfect justifying Righteous-  
 ness, even if they put together all their  
 Works of Obedience to the Commands of  
 God. *David* often speaks of the Impossi-  
 bility of our attaining the Acceptance of  
 God by our Works, *Pf. cxxx. and cxliii. 14*  
*and 19. If thou shouldest mark Iniquities, O*  
*Lord, who shall stand? Enter not into Judg-*  
*ment with thy Servant, for in thy Sight shall*  
*no Man living be justify'd. There is none*  
*Righteous; no, not one. Who can understand*  
*his Errors?* He seeks for Pardon of Sin by  
 Repentance and Trust in the Mercy of God,  
*Pf. li. and cxliii. &c.* And he pronounces

ESSAY Blessedness of those to whom God forgives

III. *their Iniquities*, Ps. xxxii. or to whom he imputes Righteousness without Works, as St. Paul explains him. Rom. iv. 6. and \* this

\* And here, by the way, I would take Occasion to relieve or explain one great Difficulty, which occurs in the reading of St. Paul's Epistles; especially those to the Romans and the Galatians. 'Tis evident that when St. Paul designs to represent the Terms of the Covenant of Works, (*viz.*) *Do this and live*, and *Cursed is every one that continues not in all Things written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 10, 12. he doth it by Citations out of the Old Testament, or the Jewish Scriptures, because the Language of the Political Covenant which God made with the Jews, (as he was their King, and they were his Nation or People) was the Language of the Covenant of Works, and God governed them very much in that way with regard to their temporal Rewards and Punishments.

On the other Hand, when St. Paul gives us the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, or the Gospel, (*viz.*) *Faith in the Grace of God thro' a Saviour*, he also cites the Old Testament, or the Jewish Scriptures. So Rom. iii. 21. Rom. iv. 3, 6, 7. Rom. x. 6 — 11. Gal. iii. 8, 11. Because the Covenant of Grace, or the way of Salvation and Eternal Life, was also prescribed, tho' in a more obscure manner, in the Old Testament, partly by Promises made to Repentance and Trust in the Mercy of God, and a *Messiah* that was to come, and partly by Sacrifices and Washings, which were Types and Figures of Repentance and Pardon, thro' the Blood of *Christ*, and Sanctification of the *Spirit*. Thus the *Righteousness of God was witnessed by the Law and the Prophets*. Rom. iii. 21. I think without this Clue 'tis impossible to read and understand the great Apostle's Way of arguing in those Epistles. See more in the *Harmony of all the Religions that God ever prescribed*. Chap. v. and vi.

encouraged him to confess his Sins, and re-  
pent of them, as in *Pf.* xxxii. and li. and  
cxxx. ESSAY III

Thus it appears, that the bare keeping  
the Commandments of the Law was neither  
under the Old Testament nor the New, the  
way to Salvation and Eternal Life for Sin-  
ners: But since *the Law was weak*, and  
unable to save, by reason of *the weakness of  
our Flesh* or sinful Nature, *Rom.* viii. 3. that  
is, since the Law promises Life only to those  
who obey the Commands perfectly, and  
Men could not obtain Life this way by rea-  
son of the Imperfection of their Obedience,  
there were many Calls to Repentance, and  
to trust in the Mercy of God, given to the  
*Jews*, in the Old Testament, as the pre-  
scribed way for Sinners to obtain Salvation;  
which Duties, together with the Grounds  
of them, and the Blessings promised to them,  
are much more clearly revealed in the New  
Testament.

I might confirm these Answers to Dr.  
*Whitby*, out of his own Exposition on *Rom.*  
x. 9. " Justification (saith he) is here ex-  
" pressly ascribed to Faith; and that not as  
" including Works, but only as being that  
" Principle which, when it is cordial and  
" sincere, will certainly produce them: I  
" say, *not as including all those Works* which  
" by the Gospel are required to Salvation,  
" for then the *Righteousness of Faith* must  
" be



ESSAY " be described as the *Righteousness of the*

III. " *Law (viz.) that the Man who doth these things shall live in them,* which is contrary to the Words of the Apostle, *ver. 5, 6.*"

So far does the Force of Truth, in some Places, constrain honest Minds to admit and confess what in other Places they are very unwilling to allow, and which they almost contradict: But this must be charged on the common or universal Influence of human Frailty and mistaken Prejudices, and for want of an equal, uniform, simultaneous and comprehensive View of all the Parts of Religion together, which no human Mind perhaps in the present State can arrive at.

*Object. 4.* There is another Objection which may be started against my Exposition of this Text, that is drawn from Rev. ii. 2, 14. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the Gates into the City,* i. e. into Heaven, and enjoy Eternal Life. Surely, say some, these Words must be acknowledged to be the Language of the Gospel, or the Covenant of Grace, and not of the Law or the Covenant of Works: For they are the Words of *Christ* himself, after his Ascension to Heaven, and yet 'tis plain that doing the Commandments is here represented as the way to obtain Eternal Life in Heaven.

*Answ.*

*Answ.* But 'tis as plain that *Doing the* ESSAY  
*ten Commandments of the moral Law,* are III.  
 not the only things that are meant here in  
 this Text: But these Commandments which  
 give a right to the Tree of Life, &c. include  
 at least, if not chiefly design, the peculiar  
 Commands of God in the Gospel, (*viz.*)  
 Repentance for Sin, Faith in the pardoning  
 Mercy of God through a Redeemer, which  
 is productive of Love to God and Man.  
 To prove this, read Matt. iv. 17. *Repent*  
*for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,*  
 Mark i. 15. *Repent and believe the Gospel,*  
 Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth shall be saved.*  
 John iii. 22, 23. *And whatsoever we ask we*  
*receive of him, because we keep his Command-*  
*ments, and do those things that are pleasing*  
*in his Sight: And this is his Commandment,*  
*that we should believe on the Name of his Son*  
*Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave*  
*us Commandment.*

Now as *Adam* by doing the peculiar Com-  
 mands which God gave to him, might have  
 obtained a Right to the Benefits of the literal  
*Tree of Life* in the Garden of Eden, (*i. e.*  
 Immortality) So *Christians* by doing the pe-  
 culiar Commandments of the Gospel, may  
 be said, in some Sense, to obtain a Right to  
 the Benefits of the spiritual *Tree of Life* (*i. e.*  
*Christ Jesus*) and may enter into Heaven:  
 But a mere Obedience to the Command-  
 ments of the moral Law is never prescribed

as

ESSAY as the way to obtain a Right to the Benefits of *Christ*, but rather an Obedience to the Commands of the Gospel, which are peculiarly Repentance and Faith in *Christ*.

It may be yet further observed, that the Commands to which *Christ* directed the young Man in my Text, in order to *enter into Life*, were not *Faith* and *Repentance*, but only the ten Commands of the moral Law: for he directs the young Man precisely to the Commands of the moral Law, and tells him, *thou knowest what these Commands are*. Now this young Man was so full of his own Obedience to that Law, and so confident of it, that he seems not to know the Commands of *Confession of Sin and Repentance for it*; much less did he think of the other Command of *Faith in the Mercy of God through a Mediator*. So that if it be never so much allow'd, that Obedience to these humbling and self-abasing Commands of the Gospel, *Faith* and *Repentance*, may give a Right to the Benefits of *Christ*, and to an Entrance into Heaven, yet an Obedience to the *ten Commands of the moral Law* could not make a Sinner's way to Heaven and Eternal Life: But these ten Commands are those which *Christ* points out to the young *Pharisaical* Inquirer.

Upon the whole it appears, that when our Saviour saith to the young Man in my Text, *If thou wilt enter into Life keep the Commandments*, he did not mean to give him the plain and direct Prescription of the Gospel



Gospel in order to the Salvation of a Sinner, ESSAY  
 but rather began with him in preaching the III.  
 Law, in order to shew him his Duty by the  
 Law, and to convince him of Sin.

And from this View of things, I think  
 we may draw this plain Observation (*viz.*)  
 That wheresoever the keeping the Com-  
 mands of God is proposed to Men in Scrip-  
 ture as the way to Life, it either means that  
 the way to obtain long temporal Life and  
 temporal Blessings, was to observe the *Jewish*  
 Laws, according to the political Covenant  
 of God made with the *Jewish* Nation at *Si-  
 nai*; or it means that perfect Obedience of  
 Thought, Word, and Action to all these  
 Commands which God gives us, is the way  
 to obtain Life Eternal by the Covenant of  
 Works and Law of Innocency: Or if at any  
 time the Context plainly determines this  
 Phrase, *keeping the Commandments*, to signi-  
 fy the way to obtain Salvation under the  
 Gospel, then the Word *Commands* must ex-  
 tend to include the Evangelical Commands  
 of *Repentance for Sin*, and *Trust in the par-  
 doning Mercy of God through a Mediator*.

And the Reason is plain; for this is the  
 great Difference always observed between  
 the Law and Gospel, or between the Cove-  
 nant of Works and the Covenant of Grace,  
 (*viz.*) that the Covenant of Works or the  
 Law, teaches us to claim Life as a Debt  
 by our own exact Obedience to the Com-  
 mands

ESSAYmands of the Law; but the Covenant of  
 III. Grace or the Gospel, teaches us humbly  
 ~~~~~ to seek for Life or Salvation by Confession  
 of Sin and Repentance, and by depending  
 on the free Mercy of God, through a Me-  
 diator, for the Forgiveness of Sin and Ac-  
 ceptance with God\*.

## S E C T. IV.

*Of what Use is it to keep the Law then?*

Before I proceed I would answer another  
*Objection or Query* or two, upon this Subject,  
 (viz.) *Of what Use is the Law of God in a  
 Christian Country? Or what Use is there of  
 keeping the Commandments of the moral Law,  
 if we are not to obtain Eternal Life by them?*

Let the *first Enquiry* be answered *first*.  
*Of what Use is the Law of God in a Christian  
 Country,*

\* Here I would caution my Readers to take notice,  
 that I am not now debating that Point, *In what man-  
 ner the Righteousness, Atonement or Death of Christ is  
 apply'd to us in order to our Interest in Forgiveness of  
 Sins, the Justification of our Persons, or our Right to  
 final Happiness:* That is an Argument of a different  
 Consideration from the present Debate. All that I pro-  
 pose here to treat of is to determine that obvious Que-  
 stion, whether *Christ* is plainly and directly shewing a  
 conceited young Man the way of obtaining Salvation ac-  
 cording to the Gospel or Covenant of Grace, when he  
 says to him, *If thou wilt enter into Life keep the Com-  
 mandments of the moral Law;* or whether he is not ra-  
 ther leading him to Conviction of Sin, by preaching the  
 Law to him, that he may be better prepared and in-  
 clined to receive the Salvation of the Gospel.

Country, where the Gospel of Christ is preach'd? ESSAY  
III.

*Ans.* It is to be feared there are several thousand Souls in a *Christian* Nation, who make a general Profession of the Religion of the blessed *Jesus*, and yet have no serious Sense of the things of God and Religion in their Hearts: And it is evident to daily Observation, that in a Land professing the Gospel of *Christ*, there are Multitudes who have abandon'd all Piety even in the Form of it, as well as the Practice and Power thereof, and there are some who have lost even Morality itself; now the *Law of God* is needful to be maintain'd, and publish'd in such a Nation as this, to keep the sinful World in awe, and to preserve even wicked Men from running to all excess of Riot and Iniquity, by pressing the Commands of God always upon their Consciences, and by setting before them the Vengeance and Curses of the Law of God, which are due to Sinners, to preserve the World from universal Disorder and Wickedness. If there were no such Representations of the Holiness and Justice of God in the World, what shameful Impieties against God, and most outrageous Iniquities and Villanies would be spread among the Children of Men: So that there would be no such thing as Peace, and Civility and Honesty to be found in severy Places. The Apostle *Paul* tells us, 1 Tim. i. 9, 10.

*Knowing*



ESSAY *Knowing this, that the Law is not made for*  
 III. *a righteous Man, but for the Lawless and Dis-*  
 ~~~~~ *obedient, for the Ungodly and for Sinners,*  
*for Unholy and Prophane, for Murderers of*  
*Fathers and Murderers of Mothers, for*  
*Manlayers, for Whoremongers, for them that*  
*defile themselves with Mankind, for Mensteal-*  
*ers, for Liars, for perjured Persons, and if*  
*there be any other thing that is contrary to*  
*sound Doctrine.*

The holy Apostle acknowledges, where the Law of God is originally written in the Heart, and a Man is made righteous by a thorough Sanctification of all the Powers of Nature as it is in Heaven, there is no such need of the Commands, Threatnings, and Terrors of a penal Law, to keep Men in the practice of Obedience; their own innocent or renewed Nature, their sincere and universal Love to God, and to his Law, will powerfully incline them to the Practice of Holiness, without the Terrors and Punishments from the Hand of the blessed God, being always kept before their Eyes.

It is true, there are some Cases wherein the Law of God may not be well known, even to good Men, or may be mistaken by them, and there may be need of special Commands to discover what is our Duty, and what is Sin: But where the Law is well known, the inward Power of universal Goodness in the Soul, without these out-  
 ward

ward Terrors, is made effectual to preserve Holiness and Obedience in the Life. ESSAY  
III.

But perhaps you will then reply, *Where there are true Christians found, of what Use is it for them to keep the Law of God?* This is the *second Enquiry*, and to this I would give several particular *Answers*, besides the first and general one. In general I say then, it must be acknowledged, that there are so many Remains of indwelling Sin in the best of Men, that Fears and Terrors of the Punishments of God, have their Use in this imperfect State, to prevent the Soul from warping aside to sinful Practices, under strong and special Temptations. Such frail and imperfect Creatures are we in this present State.

I proceed now to give some particular *Answers* to this *Question*, *Of what Use it is to keep the Law?* and they are such as these.

*Ans. 1st.* Though we are not saved from the Punishment of Hell, nor pardoned and accepted to Eternal Life and Happiness in Heaven, by virtue of our poor imperfect Obedience, and keeping the Commands of the moral Law, yet we can never be saved without it: For our Love to the Law of God, and a hearty Inclination to keep it, is a great Part of the very Salvation which the Gospel provides for sinful Men. *Jesus Christ* the Son of God is become our Saviour, not only to save us from God's Wrath, 1 Thes.

ESSAY i. 10. but also to *save us from our Sins*. Matt.

III. i. 21. and Tit. ii. 14. *He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works.* We must be restored to the Image of God as well as to his Favour; now his Image is all Holiness.

Mankind by the Fall have not only lost their Original State of Innocency and Happiness, but their natural Powers are corrupted, the Mind, Will and Passions are perverted, and defiled, and turned away from God, and from their Duty to his Law. Now 'tis one great Design of the Gospel to rectify these Disorders in the Nature of Man: 'Tis one of the Promises of the Gospel that *the Law of God shall be written in our Hearts*, Heb. x. 16. and one of the great Offices and Businesses of *Christ*, as a Saviour, is by all the Methods of his Grace and Power, to reduce our Hearts to the Love of God and his Law: *He is made Sanctification to us as well as Redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. So that for Men to talk of being saved without Love and Obedience to the moral Law of God, is to talk plain Inconsistencies, or to affirm what natural Reason can never allow, and what Scripture and the Gospel never designed; in short, 'tis to talk of being saved without Salvation.

The moral Law of God is of Eternal Obligation upon Creatures: And it would be  
our



our constant Duty to obey it, even if we ESSAY III.  
 could suppose there were no such future State,  
 no such Eternal Life provided for Men as  
 the Gospel reveals. It arises from the Rela-  
 tion between God and his Creatures. We  
 can never be disengaged or released from this  
 Duty by the Gospel, which brings in Par-  
 don and Mercy to save us from the Punish-  
 ment due to our Defects or Transgressions of  
 the Law; but not to release us from Obedi-  
 ence to it.

A holy God will not save Sinners from  
 Hell, and forgive them their Sins, without  
 making them holy. *Christ* in all his abound-  
 ing Love to Sinners, will not become a *Mi-*  
*nister of Sin*, Gal. ii. 17, 19, 20. The De-  
 sign of God in his Grace to Sinners, by *Je-*  
*sus Christ*, is that *they might be holy and with-*  
*out Blame before him in Love*, Eph. i. 4. And  
 hereby we shew that the Grace of God, in  
 the Forgiveness of Sin, is not lost upon us,  
 but obtains the End for which it was de-  
 sign'd, (*viz.*) to bring us back to God and  
 Holiness.

*Answ. 2. Good Works are necessary to ma-*  
*nifest our Gratitude to God for his par-*  
*oning Mercy: These are our Returns of Love*  
*to the blessed Jesus for his dying Love ma-*  
*nifested to us, 2 Cor. v. 15. He died for all*  
*Ranks and Characters of Men, Jews and Gen-*  
*tiles, that they who live should not henceforth*  
*live to themselves, but to him who died for*

ESSAY *them, and rose again. 1 John iv. 19. We are*  
 III. *bound to love him, and we do love him be-*  
 cause *he first loved us. 1 Cor. vi. 20. Ye are*  
 bought *with a Price, therefore glorify God with*  
 your *Body and Spirit, which are Gods.*

*Answ. 3. Good Works are also necessary to*  
*render us useful to Men our fellow Creatures,*  
*and to make our Profession honourable in*  
*their Sight. Good Works are recommended*  
*by St. Paul for this Purpose, Tit. iii. 8. This*  
*is a faithful Saying, and I will that thou con-*  
*stantly affirm, that they who have believed in*  
*God might be careful to maintain good Works.*  
*These things are good and profitable to Men.*  
 'Tis necessary to convince the World that  
 our Gospel is all holy, and that it indulges  
 and allows of no known Sin: That this Gos-  
 pel is a divine Blessing to Mankind, that it  
 carries Blessings with it wheresoever it comes,  
 that it cures the Vices of the Mind, and the  
 sinful Passions of the Heart, that it suppresses  
 all Injustice and Cruelty, Fraud and Malice,  
 Envy and Oppression, and every evil Work  
 which Sin and Satan have introduced into  
 this World. A Christian must preach and  
 prove the Purity and Power of his Gospel in  
 his whole Conversation, that it changes a  
 Lion into a Lamb, an Earth-Worm into an  
 Angel, and a Son of Adam into a Child of  
 God. This is the way to adorn the Doctrine  
 of God our Saviour, as St. Paul expresses it,  
 Tit. ii. 10. This must force a Conviction upon

the Eyes and Ears, and Consciences of Men, ESSAY III.  
that there is something Divine and Heavenly  
in our Religion.

*Answ. 4. Without Holiness and Good Works we are not, nor can be conformable to our Lord Jesus Christ: And yet all the Members must be conformed to their Head, when they are presented by him before the Father. Rom. viii. 29. God has predestinated all his Children to be conformable to the Image of his Son, that he may appear to be the First-born, and in all things may have the Pre-eminence. He must present them without Spot and Blemish, like himself, in the other World, that they may dwell with him for ever. And in this World the Disciples must resemble their Lord; Christians should be publick Blessings to the World, as their Master was, who went about doing good, Acts x. 38. and they should be known to be his Followers by this blessed Character.*

*Answ. 5. Another Use of Good Works is to evidence the Truth of our Faith, and our Interest in this Salvation, James ii. 20, 24. For Faith which does not produce good Works is dead, and cannot save us. Our Faith in Christ is made known to ourselves, as well as to the World, by our Works, Rom. viii. 1. They who are in Christ Jesus, and are free from the Condemnation of the Law, must walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, 1 John ii. 2, 3, 5. Christ is the Propitiation*



ESSAY for our Sins, and hereby we know that we know

III. him, if we keep his Commandments: And it is by keeping or obeying his Word, that we know we are in him.

*Answ. 6. Works of Holiness, a new Heart and new Obedience, are needful to fit and prepare us for the actual Possession and Blessedness of Heaven, for without Holiness no Man shall see God.\* And in this View a sincere Return to God with Obedience to his Commands, is a necessary Requisite, in order to our final Salvation, Heb. xii. 14. This blissful Vision of God is reserved only for the pure in Heart, Matt. v. 8. Sanctification is the beginning of our Salvation, and 'tis eternally necessary to continue it. We can never be happy in the Presence of God till we are like him in Holiness. Nor can we be fit Company for the holy Angels, or the Spirits*

*\* Note, when I speak of Good Works, or Works of Holiness, as necessary toward our final Salvation, or our complete Possession of heavenly Blessedness, I mean all the inward Exercises of holy Fear, and Love, and Hope, and Obedience, and Dependence, and Patience in the Heart, &c. as well as the outward Performances of the Acts of Religion and Righteousness in the Life: But it must still be understood with this Limitation, viz. They are necessary where there is Time and Room, Opportunity and Capacity for the Performance of them; so that this doth not exclude Infants from Salvation, who are not capable of exercising the Principles of Grace: Nor doth it exclude dying Penitents who have no space of Time allow'd them for living a Life of Holiness.*

of

of the Just made perfect, unless we are con-  
formable to their Temper.

ESSAY

III.

And it should be observed also, that this *Preparation* or *Fitness* for Heaven, may be sometimes represented as a *Right* to the Blessedness of it, because the Promises of Heaven are sometimes made to those who are thus qualify'd and prepared, and these Promises give them a *Right* to it\*. Matt. v. 3, 5, 6, 8, &c. *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God, &c.* Rev. xxii. 14. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the Gates into the City.* Yet it may be remember'd what I said before, that *these Commandments* do not signify directly the ten Commandments of the Law, but rather the Commands of *Jesus Christ*, or of God in the Gospel, which indeed include a sincere Obedience to the moral Law, and something more (*viz.*) *Repentance and Faith in Christ.*

\* Some Divines have here distinguish'd (as I have elsewhere shewn) between a *Jus hæreditatis*, or a *Right of Heirship* through Faith in *Christ*, whereby we become the Sons of God, and have a Title to Heaven; and a *Jus aptitudinis*, that is, a *Right of Fitness*, whereby we are actually prepared, by Sanctification and Holiness, for the Possession of this Heavenly Inheritance. He that is an Heir by Birth or by Adoption, has a *Title* to an Estate or a Crown; but he acquires a *Right* to the actual Possession, by being train'd up to a *Fitness* for it, at the time appointed, by him who is his natural Father, or his Adopter.

L 4

Answ.

ESSAY *Answ.* 7. I might add, in the last place,  
 III. that *Holiness of Life or Obedience to the Com-*  
 ~~~~~ *mands of God, is necessary in order to make*  
*the Process of the last Judgment appear equi-*  
*table and righteous in the Eyes of all Mankind;*  
*for Christ the Judge shall render to every one*  
*according to their Works,* Rev. xxii. 12. Rom.  
 ii. 5, 6. 1 Cor. xv. 58. And indeed this is  
 one chief Design of God's appointing such a  
 solemn and publick Transaction as the last  
 Judgment, that all the Creation may see the  
 Equity or Righteousness of the Dealings of  
 God with Men, that he awards the eternal  
 Recompense to Saints and Sinners, ac-  
 cording to their different Characters of Vice  
 and Virtue, Sin and Holiness. *The Vessels of*  
*Wrath* are by their own Rebellion and Im-  
 penitence *fitted to Destruction,* and *the Ves-*  
*sels of Mercy* are by sanctifying Grace and  
 Holiness *before prepar'd unto Glory,* Rom.  
 ix. 22, 23.

Though our own Works are by no means  
 sufficient to atone for Sin, or to procure the  
 Favour of God or Eternal Life, for such  
 guilty Creatures as we are, yet there is (as  
 Dr. Owen, I think in his Book of Justifica-  
 tion, calls it) a *rewardable Condecency* in the  
 Works of Holiness, and there is many a Pro-  
 mise of heavenly Rewards made to them in  
 the New Testament: Now when *Christ* shall  
 adjudge the Wicked to Hell, and the Saints  
 to Heaven, the whole Creation must approve the  
 the




the Equity of his Dealings with Men. In the Essay  
mean time the Saints shall admire the Grace III.  
of God, and the Mediation of *Christ*, while  
they see how unworthy they and their  
Works are of such a glorious Reward.

Thus we find there is abundant Reason for  
our Obedience to the Commands of the mo-  
ral Law, tho' it is not made the proper Con-  
dition, or prescribed Term of our Acceptance  
with God, and of obtaining Happiness by the  
Gospel; for 'tis only perfect Obedience to  
these Commands in Thought, Word and  
Deed, can give us a Right to Eternal Life,  
according to the Law. And yet a sincere  
Endeavour after universal Obedience to them,  
is one necessary Requisite of our being ap-  
proved by *Christ* at last, and our actual En-  
trance into Heaven, according to the Gospel.  
Hereupon I am bold to affirm, that those  
Persons whom all these Reasons cannot draw  
to the sincere Practice of Holiness, may be  
sure they never believed in *Christ*, and are  
not Partakers of the Salvation of the Gospel;  
for the great and necessary Duty of Christiani-  
ty is *Faith which works by Love*, Gal. v. 6.  
*The Heart is purify'd by true Faith*, Acts xv.  
9. And *Faith without Works is dead*, and  
is unable to save us, *Jam.* ii. 20, 26.

## S E C T.

1. Reflexion. *It is a dangerous thing to mistake the great Design of Christ's Ministry here on Earth.* Let us learn from this Discourse, that our Saviour often preached to Sinners the Gospel of Grace and Forgiveness, of Repentance and Faith in himself; yet that his chief Business here, was not to preach the Gospel constantly, nor to preach it in its full Light, Perfection and Glory; but rather to prepare the way for it when he had laid the Foundation in his own Death and Resurrection, and when his Kingdom should be set up in the World in his Apostles, and by his Spirit, and built upon this Foundation. He prepared the Way for his Spirit, and his Apostles, even as *John the Baptist* prepared the Way for him.

The great Business of *Christ* in this Life on Earth, was to appear with the Characters of the *Messiah* on him; to answer the Types and Prophecies that went before concerning him; to pass thro' the Stages of Life without Sin as our Example; to yield a perfect Obedience to the Law, and fulfil all those Precepts in Perfection which we could never fulfil; to preach the Law in the Spirituality and Perfection of its Demands, and begin to open the Gospel; to resign and submit himself to  
Death,

Death, as a Sacrifice for Sin, accursed by the Law, and devoted to the punishing Justice of God : And hereby he laid a Foundation for clearer preaching the Gospel of Forgiveness of Sins through his Blood, which Doctrine he just mentions to his Disciples at the last Supper. 

As for his own publick Preaching, it chiefly consisted in clear and full Explications of the Law of God in its Spirituality, which had been shamefully obscured and curtailed by the *Jewish* Doctors; in bringing the invisible Worlds of Heaven and Hell into a nearer and brighter View; in vindicating his own Conduct against the Accusations of Men; in maintaining his own Character, as one sent of God; in reprovng the *Jews* for their corrupt Traditions, for their Hypocrisy, for their Self-Righteousness, for their Uncharitableness to the *Gentiles*, and thus calling the World to Conviction of Sin and Repentance, and preparing the Way by his Parables for the Reception of the *Gentiles* into the Church. When he preached the Gospel of his Atonement for Sin and Faith in his Blood, it was rather in secret to his Disciples; or if in publick, 'twas generally in dark Sayings and Parables, and mystical Expressions, such as, *The Son of Man being lifted up and drawing all Men to him, giving his Flesh for Meat to the People, and his Blood for Drink, &c.* The plainest Intimations, which (I think)  
*Christ*



ESSAY *Christ* ever gave of the Salvation of Sinners by

III. his own Death as a Sacrifice, to People who were not his Disciples, was in those metaphorical Words two or three times repeated in the Tenth Chapter of *John*, *I am the good Shepherd, who giveth his Life for the Sheep.* But when his Death and Resurrection had laid a fairer Foundation for the Gospel, then he taught it his Disciples much more plainly after his Resurrection, both by his Conversation and by his Spirit, and sent them to publish it to the whole World more gloriously than ever he himself taught it to the *Jews*. See this explain'd more at large in Dr. *Watts's* second Sermon on *the Atonement of Christ*.

Now, I say, a Mistake in the Design of *Christ's* publick Preaching, may lead many People into some unhappy Mis-apprehensions about several Things, and particularly about the Way of Salvation by the Gospel. For,

1. When we hear *Christ* preach the Law so much, and speak of *entering into Life by keeping the Commandments*, if we imagine all this to be the clear Gospel, *we shall seek to be saved as it were by the Works of the Law*, which the Apostle so severely reproves the *Galatians* for, and the *Jews* or *Jewish Christians*, who dwelt among the *Romans*. *Rom.* ix. 31, 32. *Gal.* iii. 1, &c. and iv. 21. and v.

4. And if our Opinions and Conduct be the same, we shall expose ourselves to the same  
sacred

sacred Reproof of the Apostle, and be greatly bewildered in the way to Heaven. ESSAY I  
III.

2. *Such a Mistake in the Design of Christ's preaching the Law, as tho' he taught it as the Way for the Salvation of Sinners, will incline us to expound the Law in so gross and defective a Sense, as the Pharisees did of old, that so expounded, Sinners may be able to keep it, and obey the Commands of it sufficient to gain Salvation thereby.* It will tempt us to retrench and diminish the Perfection of its Demands of universal Holiness in Thought, Word and Deed; because otherwise we cannot yield a perfect Obedience. Whereas it is much more glorious to God, the Governor of the World, to suppose his holy Law still maintains its own perfect Purity, and its original Demands of constant universal Obedience; and 'tis more glorious to God our Saviour, to suppose that he has provided an effectual Way for the Salvation of sinful Creatures, who trust in divine Mercy, and who love the Law of God, tho' their best Obedience to it be very defective.

3. *Such a Mistake will lead Ministers to neglect the mention of the Death and Sufferings of Christ as a Sacrifice for Sin, and as the Foundation of our Pardon and our Hope; it will lead them to omit these important Points in their Descriptions of the Gospel, and in their Accounts of Faith in Christ; because Christ never spoke so publickly and*  
plainly

ESSAY plainly to the People, of making Atonement  
 III. for Sin by his Death, &c. And upon this

Account we shall be in danger of leaving this Doctrine out of our Directions of Sinners when they seek the Way to Salvation, which is now made plainer and more necessary since the Death and Resurrection of *Christ* are accomplished, since the Apostles have particularly explain'd this Doctrine, and the New Testament is compleat.

4. *This Mistake will tempt us to set Christ and his Apostles at variance about the Way of Salvation. Christ says, If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments; and the Apostles say, The Law is the Ministration of Death, but believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; and we are justified by Faith without the Works of the Law, &c.* And thus we shall make the Holy Scripture contradict itself: Or if we endeavour to accommodate and reconcile these seeming Oppositions, upon a Supposition that *Christ* in the Language of my Text preached the Gospel, it can never be done, with Fairness and Justness of Thought, without straining the Words of Scripture from their natural Sense; and it will ever bring a Darkness upon the Distinction between the Law and Gospel, and leave the Way of Salvation by the Gospel under much Confusion.

5. *This will tempt and incline us to expound the clear Gospel, which we find in the Writings*  
*and*



and Preaching of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Essay  
John, after the Death and Resurrection of III.  
Christ, by one of the legal Expressions of our Sa-  
viour, when in his own Life-time he preach'd  
the Law for the Conviction of Sinners: We  
shall interpret the Words and Language of  
the Gospel into the Sense of the Law of  
Works: We shall almost explain away the  
Covenant of Grace, and make a Covenant  
of Works of it: And thus, perhaps, expose  
ourselves to the Danger of St. Paul's Censure  
and Anathema, by preaching another Gospel,  
or perverting the Gospel of Christ, Gal. i. 8.

6. This Mistake will lead us to slight and  
despise the Writings of the Apostles, as tho'  
they never did nor could preach the Gospel so  
clearly as Christ himself; whereas they were  
really design'd and sent forth after the Death  
and Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, to  
preach the full Gospel to the Nations in clear-  
er and stronger Language than Jesus himself  
ever did to the Multitude; they were in-  
structed and commissioned to publish the  
Way to Salvation by Christ, in a brighter and  
more explicate Manner and Expression, than  
his Divine Wisdom thought proper to do be-  
fore he had actually died and rose again, by  
which Transactions he laid the Foundation  
for preaching the Gospel more clearly and  
perfectly.

A Mistake about the personal Ministry of  
Christ, in such Passages as this in my Text,  
will

ESSAY will make us look upon the glorious and evangelical Paragraphs in the Sermons and the Epistles of *Peter*, *Paul* and *John*, as mere affectionate and fervent Pieces of Discourse, according to the warm Temper and lively Fancies of those honest and zealous Men, who in the Heat of their Spirits spoke many Things mystically and unintelligibly. This hath been the profess'd Opinion of some who are called *Christians* concerning the great Apostle; and upon this Account they think none of his Writings are to be read without great Caution: But if you will seek the Way of Salvation aright (say they) you must go to the Mount, and hear our Saviour's Sermon there, in the v. vi. and vii. Chapters of the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, while they neglect the more evangelical Speeches even of *Christ* himself. This has been the Language of some Men, the Leaders of the Consciences of the ignorant Multitude, who are by Nature inclined enough to a Covenant of Works, and need not be taught and persuaded to build all their Hopes of Heaven upon the Works of the Law, which *Christ* never designed in that noble and admirable Sermon of his on the Mountain.

But now if we suppose *Christ* frequently preaching the Law, on purpose to shew the *Jews* the grossest Defects and Imperfection of their Obedience, and their Need of a Saviour, and giving such Hints of the Gospel as  
were

were suited to that Dispensation of his Life **ESSAY**  
 and personal Ministry; and if we suppose the **III.**  
 Apostles more fully preaching this Gospel  
 (which our Saviour just opened and begun  
 in his Lifetime) and publishing it in all its  
 Glory of Righteousness and Grace, after the  
 Death and Resurrection of *Christ*, because it  
 was not proper to be thus clearly preached  
 before, then we may well reconcile the diffe-  
 rent Language of St. *Paul* and of *Christ*,  
 when one saith, *Believe on the Lord Jesus*  
*Christ and thou shalt be saved*, and the other,  
*If thou wilt enter into Life keep the ten Com-*  
*mandments.* 'Tis certain that the *Law is not*  
*against the Promises*, Gal. iii. 21. but the  
*Law is our Schoolmaster*, and Leader of us  
 as Children to *Christ*; so the Greek Word  
*παιδαγωγος* means, Gal. iii. 24. Conviction  
 of Sin by *Christ's* preaching of the Law,  
 leads Men, as in a lower School, as yet, to  
 proceed farther, and to seek for and embrace  
 the Grace of *Christ* in the Gospel, as 'tis  
 preached more fully and clearly by his A-  
 postles under the Teachings of his Spirit.

This Scheme and View of Things being  
 well adjusted in the Mind, will help us to  
 understand many of those legal Expressions  
 in the New Testament, which might seem  
 to lead us to the Covenant of Works again,  
 or which seem to mingle the Law and Gos-  
 pel for Salvation, if we will but remember

M that



ESSAY that the Holy Ghost in the New Testament  
 III. sometimes discovers the *Law* in its Severity and Perfection of Demands for the Conviction of Sin, as well as for the Discovery of our Duty, and sometimes reveals the *Gospel* in the Riches of its Grace, for the Faith and Salvation of awakened Sinners.

## REFLEXION II.

*How firm and durable is the ancient and perfect Law of God, which requires perfect, constant and persevering Obedience? It is an eternal Law: It is not yet abolished, tho' the Gospel be introduc'd, nor shall it be thro' all the Ages of Mankind, and the several Dispensations of God toward Men. The moral Law is sometimes said to be a Transcript or Copy from the Nature and Attributes of God; the Duties there required bear the more perfect Stamp and Signature of his essential Perfections, and therefore the Law must be unchangeable.*

And not only the Requirements of Duty, but I think the Sanctions of the Law also in its promised Rewards and threatned Penalties are everlasting. *He that doth these Commands perfectly shall live in, or by them: But Cursed is he that continueth not in all the Commands of the Law to do them, and he must die, Gal. iii. 10, 12. I do not find any Scripture that tells me, that the Commands,*  
 or

or the Sanctions are repealed, \* tho' God hath provided a Way to deliver Men who receive

ESSAY

III.

\* If it should be said, that the Apostle in *Heb. vii. 18.* says, *There is verily a disannulling of the Commandments for the Weakness and Unprofitableness thereof, for the Law made nothing perfect, &c.* I answer, that the Context plainly shews that the Words *Law* and *Commandment* here, do not mean the *Moral Law*, but refer either to the *Sinai Covenant*, or the whole Scheme of the *Jewish Oeconomy*, and particularly to the *Levitical Priesthood* which is abrogated, because it could not make a proper Atonement for Sin.

If it should be objected yet again, that the same Apostle in *Rom. vii. 6.* declares, that *we are now delivered from the Law, that being dead in which we were held*; and that the *Law* in this Place means the *Ten Commandments*, because the Apostle argues from the Tenth Command, *Thou shalt not Covet*: I answer, that the Apostle there plainly means, that *now* under the Gospel we who are true Christians, and are entered into the Covenant of Grace by Faith, are deliver'd from the Bondage and Chains of the *Law* as a Covenant of Works, whereby our indwelling Sins were rather irritated and provoked than subdued: *It is dead, i. e.* it has lost its unhappy Influences on true Believers: But not that the *Law* itself is abolished, either as a Rule of Life to Christians, or as a condemning Covenant of Works to those who are not entered into the New Covenant or a State of Grace, by Faith and Repentance: For he adds, *v. 12.* that even now *the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, and just, and good.*

If this might be explained by a Similitude, I think 'tis much in the same manner as the *Penal Laws against the Protestant Dissenters* in *England*, are not abolish'd, but stand in Force still: Yet they have no Power to hurt any Person who accepts of the *Act of Toleration*, and quali-

ESSAY receive the Gospel and enter into God's new  
 III. Covenant from the Bondage of the Law as a  
 ~~~~~ Covenant of Works, and to release and free  
 repenting Sinners from this cursed Death, to  
 deliver them from this Sentence of Condem-  
 nation, and to bestow on them the Blessings  
 of Eternal Life.

It is granted indeed, as the Apostle con-  
 fesses, *Rom. viii. 3.* That *thro' the Weakness*  
*of our Flesh the Law is become weak* and una-  
 ble to save Sinners; because their corrupt Na-  
 ture and fleshly Inclinations render them un-  
 able to keep it perfectly; but, as I intimated  
 before, it is not weak in its own Nature to  
 give Life. *Christ* in my Text preaches the  
 Law, and says, *If thou keep the Command-*  
*ments.* (*i. e.* with a persevering Constancy,  
 and a sinless Perfection) *thou shalt enter into*  
*Life*: What *Christ* speaks is true. If any  
 Man appear who hath been guilty of no Sin,  
 and hath fulfilled the Law of God in every  
 tittle of it in Thought, Word and Deed, he  
 shall have eternal Happiness. *Rom. ii. 7.*  
*They who seek for Glory, Honour and Immor-*  
*tality, by patient continuance in well doing* (*ἐν*  
*ἐργῶ ἀγαθῶν*, in one good Work, without in-  
 termission or interruption by any Sin) *they*  
*shall have Eternal Life.* This is the Lan-  
 guage

fies himself accordingly: Tho' indeed there is this Differ-  
 ence, that it can never be said, that those Penal Laws  
 are now, or ever were either *Holy, Just* or *Good*, as the  
 Law of God is.



guage of the Law of Works. But our In-  
capacity to fulfil this Law in our fallen State, hath awaken'd the Compassion of God to provide a Gospel of Grace and Pardon, and to send his Son *Jesus Christ* down from Heaven to Earth for this very Purpose, that humble, repenting, returning Sinners, who trust in the Mercy of God thro' a Mediator, might be saved, even while they cannot fulfil the perfect Demands of this pure and holy Law, tho' they sincerely endeavour it.

The Great and Blessed God maintains his holy Law still in its own Perfection and Glory, tho' we have lost our practical or moral Power of obeying it perfectly: I say, we have lost, by our Fall in *Adam*, our moral or practical Power of perfect Obedience to the Law; but our natural Powers of Understanding, Will and Affections remain, and there is no other natural Power or Faculty required, in order to obey it. And since our natural Powers remain, the Great God requires perfect Obedience of us, and all Men, to his holy Law, and yet he assures us by his Gospel, that he will not inflict the Curse of the Law on those who heartily repent of their Sins, and trust in *Christ*, tho' they do not or cannot yield perfect Obedience to this Law.

He doth not lessen or diminish the Demands of his Law, which requires *Perfection* still; for his Nature is too pure to require only an *imperfect* Obedience. If God under

ESSAY the Gospel, had quite laid aside, or abolished

III. his Law, and required or commanded no more than such a sincere imperfect Obedience, or such good Works which converted and pious Men perform, then they would fulfil the Requirements or Commands of God, and would have no Sin, and such Persons would need no Pardon. But this is contrary to the whole Tenor of the New Testament. *If we say we have no Sin, we make God a Liar, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us,* 1 John i. 10. The Law of God is Eternal, and demands perfect Obedience of every Creature: But his Grace pardons those who cannot come up to the perfect Demands of this Law, by reason of the moral Impotence contracted by the Fall, if they apply themselves to *Jesus Christ* his Son, according to the Rules of the Gospel.

The Law therefore is Holy, and Just, and Good, and will be so to all Generations, *Rom. vii. 12.* and when our Saviour was beginning his divine and admirable Exposition of it on the Mount, he warns us in *Matt. v. 17, 18.* *Think not I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil: for verily I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled;* and our Lord *Jesus Christ* has put Honour upon his Father's Law several ways.

1. He preached and explained it in the glorious Purity and Perfection of it. ESSAY  
III.

2. He fulfilled it all himself in most exact Obedience, and thereby set all his Followers an admirable Example how to fulfil it.

3. He suffered Death for the Dishonour we had cast upon it by our Sins, not to destroy the Sanction of it, but to free us from the Curse.

4. He hath taken all the Rules or Commandments of it into the Scheme of his Gospel, as divine Rules and Directions for the constant Practice of Believers, and obliges them to obey it with their utmost Care and Endeavour, tho' he hath taken away from them that Curse and Condemnation, which originally belongs to every degree of Disobedience.

5. He sends his own Holy Spirit continually to write this Law in the Hearts of his People, and to form and mould their Souls to a delightful Conformity to the Rules of it.

Thus it appears, that *Christ Jesus* himself and the very Scheme of the Gospel doth confirm and not abolish the Law. *Rom. iii. 31.* The Law is everlasting, and the Gospel doth not destroy it, while yet it relieves guilty Creatures from the deserved Penalties.



ESSAY  
III.

## REFLECTION III.

*How useful is it to meditate and study, to preach and explain the Law of God, and that not only for the Direction of our Life and Actions, but also for the same End that our Saviour preach'd it in my Text to this young Man, (viz.) to convince of Sin. So Rom. iii. 20. By the Law is the Knowledge of Sin, Rom. iv. 15. The Law worketh Wrath; it sheweth to the Consciences of Men the Wrath of God, which is due to Sin, and therefore saith the Apostle, I by the Law am dead to the Law. Gal. ii. 1<sup>6</sup>, 19. By considering and studying the Purity, the Extent, and Perfection of the Law of God, I am dead to all Expectation of Righteousness and Life by it, for I see I cannot fulfil its pure and perfect Demands, and therefore I fly to the Gospel as my only Refuge and Hope.*

We must be made sensible of our Guilt of Sin, our Liableness to Death and Misery, and our Incapacity to save ourselves by the Law, that we may fly to the Gospel of Grace. We must be wounded by the Law that we may seek and find healing by the Gospel. The Law imprest on the Conscience is an excellent Preparative for the Gospel of Forgiveness; for Sinners that are not awaken'd to a Sense of Sin and Danger, will not hear the sweet Invitations of the Saviour. Dare not charge and censure those as legal Preachers, who

who frequently preach the Law of God in **ESSAY**  
 its Demands and in its Curses: There is abun- **III.**  
 dant Use of preaching the Law, for many  
 excellent Purposes under the Dispensation of  
 the Gospel: *Jesus* himself is our Pattern.

## REFLECTION IV.

*How happy are we who live under the clear and complete Light of the Gospel, as it is explain'd and illustrated by the inspired Apostles, since the Death and Resurrection of our blessed Saviour.* We are happier in several Respects, than those that lived even in the Lifetime of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. We are ready to say within ourselves, Surely if I had seen *Christ* in the Flesh, I must have loved him: If I had beheld his pure and perfect Example of Holiness, I could not help imitating: If I had heard him  *speak as never Man spake,* I must have embraced his Doctrine, and submitted to his Instructions: But we are much mistaken in this Thought, for we might have been carried away from *Christ* by the common national Prejudices against him, we might have been among the proud *Pharisees*, building up a Righteousness of our own, and refusing the Gospel, while we heard *Jesus* himself preach it. Multitudes who heard this glorious Preacher rejected his Divine Counsels, and perished in their Unbelief and Disobedience, though they had as good an Opinion of themselves as we have.

Besides

ESSAY Besides many other Advantages that we  
 III. have now, beyond what they had in the  
 Days of *Christ*; besides the many Predictions  
 and Promises that are since accomplish'd,  
 which confirm his Mission; besides the Ex-  
 plication of a greater part of the old Testa-  
 ment, by the Apostles, than could have  
 been done before the Death of *Christ*; besides  
 the many Proofs of the Christian Religion,  
 which we derive from the Resurrection and  
 Ascension of *Christ*, and the Arguments  
 drawn from the miraculous Gifts of the Spi-  
 rit, which could never have been brought in  
 our Saviour's Life-time, we have this Ad-  
 vantage also among others, that we have the  
 Gospel set in a clearer Light by his Apostles,  
 in their Sermons and Epistles, than our Sa-  
 viour himself set it in, by his own personal  
 Ministry.

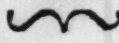
That Divine Teacher explain'd the Law  
 clearly, and set the Commands of it in their  
 full Light and Beauty, partly to lead us to  
 a more spiritual Practice than the *Pharisees*,  
 and the *Jewish* Doctors of the Law were ac-  
 quainted with, and partly to shew our utter  
 Incapacity of keeping the Law, or obtaining  
 Eternal Life by it: He also began to publish  
 the Gospel of Grace, Repentance and For-  
 giveness; but (as was declared before) his  
 sovereign Wisdom did not think proper pub-  
 lickly to explain and illustrate this Gospel of  
 Forgiveness with the Doctrine of his own  
 Sacrifice,



Sacrifice, his Death, his Atonement for our Sins, his Resurrection for our Justification, his Intercession for us in Heaven, and his ruling the World for the Good of his People: He left all this to be done by his Apostles, when the Spirit should come down upon them and teach them many things which they could not bear in his Life-time, and which therefore he did not clearly teach them. *John xvi. 12.*

Value therefore and love the Gospel, and return not to the Law of Works, as the Means or Rule of your Justification, Gal. iv. 21. *Tell me ye that desire to be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law, how it curses every Sinner, and condemns them all without Remedy and without Hope? 'Tis the Business of Sinners to fly to and live upon this Gospel of Forgiveness, and not seek to establish their own imperfect Righteousness before God. Rejoice in the way of Justification by the Obedience, Death and Resurrection of the Son of God in Flesh. Never hope to obtain Pardon of Sin, and to secure the Salvation which Christ has revealed, by your own keeping the Commandments of the Law, for your best Righteousnesses are all very defective and insufficient: But repent of Sin, trust in Christ, and live upon atoning Blood and pardoning Grace, while you humbly seek after the highest Degrees of Holiness and Conformity to the Commands of the Law.*

ESSAY LAW. By this means you shall *magnify the*

III. *Law of God, and make it honourable in the*  
 Sight of Men, even while your Hope of Salvation and Eternal Life is entirely owing to the rich Grace of God in the Gospel of his Son *Jesus*: To him that has loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his Blood, to him that has redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, by being made a Curse and a Sacrifice for us, be Glory, Honour and Dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

## ESSAY

It is proper to put in a Remark here, which perhaps would have been better placed at the End of the *first Essay, viz.*

That that ingenious Commentator Dr. *Whitby*, was well known to the learned World, when he wrote his Comment on the New Testament, to be a pretty warm Defender of the *Arminian* Doctrines concerning the *Will of Man* and *Divine Grace*, &c. though at the same time he was a zealous Opposer of the *Socinian* Sentiments concerning the *Person of Christ*, and a strict and zealous asserter of the Doctrine of his *Satisfaction* and *Atonement for Sin*, and probably he borrow'd some of his Sentiments on that Point from Dr. *Owen*, on the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. In his latter Days, a little before his Death, he seemed to raise the Character of the human Nature of *Christ* as high as the *Arians* do, but supposed it still below Divinity.

## ESSAY IV.

*The Mistaken Ways of coming to  
GOD without CHRIST.*

JOHN xiv. 6.

*No Man cometh to the Father but by me.*

**I**F the Race of Man were immortal on Earth, and Sinners were never summon'd to die, or if they could put an eternal End to their Souls when the Body lies down in the Dust, there would be little Concern among us, *How shall I come and appear before God? or What shall I do to obtain his Favour?* Sinful Creatures seem to live well enough among the Cares or Amusements of this Life, though they are *without God in the World*; and if they could live for ever without seeing him, - or could plunge into Death and the unseen World, and not meet him there, they would take no Thought about that grand Enquiry, which *Balak the King of Moab* thought to be of such Importance, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, or bow my self before the high God?*



ESSAY

But when the Consciences of Men begin  
 IV. to be convinced that they are Transgres-  
 ~~~~~ sors against the Law of their Maker, and  
 that they must one Day appear before him,  
 as their Governor and their Judge, and an-  
 swer for their Conduct, then they inquire  
 in good earnest, *What they shall do to stand*  
*in his Sight with Acceptance, or to draw*  
*near his Majesty without Terror?* Then  
 Reason and Nature exert all their Forces to  
 find an Answer to this grand Question.

But Nature and Reason darkened and  
 weakened by the Fall of Man, and unaf-  
 fisted by Revelation and divine Grace, lead  
 them into many mistaken ways, such as  
 will never bring them into the Favour of him  
 who made them, nor obtain true Happiness.  
 Poor foolish and fallen Mankind is ready to  
 try many means of procuring Eternal Life  
 for themselves, before they will betake  
 themselves to the one only way which God  
 has appointed by his Gospel, and that is,  
*Faith in Jesus Christ.*

Of the several *mistaken Ways* that Sinners  
 are ready to chuse in this Case, these three  
 are the chief, (*viz.*) The Way of *supposed*  
*Innocency*, The Way of *Dependance on God's*  
*general Goodness*, and the Way of their  
 own *Repentance* and *Self-Righteousness*. Let  
 us consider each of these, and enquire into  
 the Justness of their Pretensions.

First,

First, *The Way of Innocency.* How many Souls are there in such a Land as this, IV. who come to God with a thoughtless Confidence, and expect to find Mercy at his Hands, though they are conscious they have not done so much Good as they ought, nor have been so religious as they should be? yet they think they are harmless and have done no Wrong, and therefore they are safe for Eternity. Perhaps, by Education and other Methods of restraining Grace, they have escaped the viler Pollutions of the Age, and been preserved from gross Impieties: Then they hope and believe all shall go well with them, and dream of nothing but the Favour of God, and Happiness after Death, because their Life has been outwardly unblameable in the World. Thus they live, and thus they die.

Ask these Persons when they lye languishing on a dying Pillow, "How they can venture to appear before the great the just and the holy God, in the World of Spirits?" They will readily return this Answer, They have done no Harm, and they hope God will do them none; they have wronged no Man, and they know not why they should not be accepted of God. Poor ignorant, unthinking Creatures! One would wonder that so gross Blindness and Stupidity should remain on the Minds of any who sit under the preaching of the Law

ESSAY and Gospel. Let me endeavour to convince

IV. such Sinners here, and prove that this Hope  
 ~~~~~ is a false and dangerous one.

I. If it were possible that they should be found such as they suppose themselves, that is, innocent in their *outward Carriages and Actions* toward their fellow Creatures, yet have their *Language* and their *Lips* been always innocent too? Or if they have in the main learnt to bridle their Tongues from gross Falsehood, and Wrath, and Slander, yet have they never indulged evil Imaginations against their Neighbour, and the working of evil Passions? Sirs, if we construe the Law of Duty to extend to our Hearts, as well as to our Lips and our Lives, as our Saviour has construed it in his Sermon on the Mount, *Matt. v. and vi. and vii.* who is there can ever plead Innocence?

You have kept your Actions to all Appearance tolerably blameless, with regard to Men, but have you never broken the last Command of the second Table, never desirous or covetous of another's Possessions in Thought, never been guilty of Immorality's in Heart? Can such Souls plead at the Bar of God, that they never allow'd one envious Thought against their Neighbour, and never let loose a malicious Word? That they never coveted that which belong'd to another, nor wilfully lessened their Neighbour's good Name or Reputation? Did they never find



find Wrath or Revenge kindling and burning within them without Resistance? Did they never indulge the Motions of Lust or Intemperance, or any sinful Desire stirring in their Hearts? When the great Apostle, in the second and third Chapters to the *Romans*, is convincing all the World of Sin, and laying Mankind under a Sense of Guilt, he convinces them effectually by their Breach of the second Table, *that all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.* Rom. ii. 21. and iii. 10, 12—14, &c.

Where's the Son or Daughter of *Adam* that can stand forth and say, I never dishonoured Father or Mother, nor ever disobey'd the just Commands of my Superiors; I never was unreasonably angry against another; I never encouraged a wanton Thought within me, nor indulged any covetous and sinful Wish; I never broke the Rule of Temperance in eating and drinking, nor ever gave way to an irregular Passion. I never was guilty of known Falshood in Design or in Word. Let Mankind take but these Laws of God, which regard themselves and their Neighbours, and make a sincere Examination of themselves thereby, and their own Consciences will soon condemn the very best of them in the Sight of God. They are all condemn'd by the Law of Innocence, and

N

if

ESSAY if they have no better Plea, they will meet  
 IV. with an offended and angry God, in whose  
 Sight no Sinner can stand and find Acceptance. His Law is wise and righteous, and every Violation of it deserves a Proportion of Punishment.

Perhaps they will plead after such a strict Enquiry, that though they have not been perfectly innocent, yet their Offences have not been gross and constant; but only of the smaller kind and few in Number, and therefore they hope for Excuse: But the Apostle *James* takes away this Hope also, when he tells us, *James* ii. 8, 10. *Whoever shall keep the whole Law and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all*, for by one wilful Sin he abuses that Governor and affronts that Authority by which all the Commands are enjoin'd. Nor is any wilful Sin small in the Sight of Divine Justice, for it is the Fruit of a presumptuous Heart, and is therefore highly criminal.

But suppose after their own Review of their Behaviour, they should pronounce themselves quite innocent, and say boldly, *they knew nothing by themselves*; yet they are not sufficiently justified hereby, for God sees the Heart, and he knows us better than we know our selves. 1 *Cor.* vii. 2. and 1 *Cor.* iv. 4. *Receive us, saith St. Paul, we have wronged no Man; we have corrupted no Man; we have defrauded no Man; for though I know nothing*

*nothing by my self, i. e. nothing of Fraud or Deceit, or wilful Injury, yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* ESSAY IV.

The Eyes of God are a Flame of Fire, and will find Iniquity where I can find none, for he sees all the Disguises and Veils of Self-Love and Self-Flattery, whereby every Man is naturally prone to cover his Sins, and to impose upon himself. He beholds those secret Ferments, those hidden Operations and Motions of Sin in the Soul, which pass by unnoticed to ourselves, and escape the Accusation and Charge of our Consciences. He knows so perfectly all the just Demands of his own Law, in the Lengths and the Breadths thereof, and is so perfectly acquainted with all the Motions of our Hearts, all their Follies and Passions, and sinful Byasses, that he can find in us a thousand Contrarieties to his Law, where we are fondly ready to presume upon our own Innocence. Should I say with *Job*, Chap. ix. ver. 30. *If I should wash myself in Snow-Water, and make my Hands never so clean, thou wilt plunge me in the Ditch, and my own Clothes would abhor me.* i. e. If I should use all my own Purifications, thou wilt discover me to be still as greatly defiled with Sin, as one who is plunged into a Ditch, and is unfit to put on his common Raiment, lest he defile that and every thing about him.



## ESSAY

## IV.

Alas, how little do Men believe this? How little do they know and think of their own Guilt in the Sight of God, and the Depth of their own Misery! How are they led by their own Thoughtlessness and shameful Ignorance of themselves to build their Hopes for Eternity on a very sandy Foundation, which will never stand in the Day of that Divine Tempest, which shall try every Man's Work?

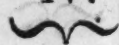
You imagine, God will not be so strict a Judge, and so severe, as Preachers represent him; but how do you know that he will not be thus severe in his Enquiries and his Judgment? I'm well assured the mere Light of Nature can never assure you of it, nor secure you against this Severity: And the Scripture often represents him thus severe in his Judgment, form'd by the Rules of his own Law, and abstracted from the Gospel of his Grace. *David* knew this in ancient times, *Pf. cxxx. 3. and cxliii. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark Iniquities; O Lord, who can stand? No Man living shall be justify'd in thy Sight. All Mankind are Sinners; There is none righteous; no, not one: Every Mouth is stopped, and the whole World lies guilty before God. Rom. iii. 19.*

2. If we were entirely *innocent as to Man*, would that be sufficient to answer for all our *Injuries and Dishonours done to God*? Would this honest and blameless Conduct among  
your

your Neighbours, atone for all your Neglects of Religion, and your shameful Forgetfulness of God your Maker? What? Did God send you into this World among sensible things, and give you leave to neglect him, who is the Eternal and Almighty Spirit? Did he form your Spirits within you, and give you understanding and Reason, and noble Powers to know the God that made you, and never require or expect that you should use them to obtain this Knowledge? Have you a Tongue to speak, and yet never speak to him in Petition or Praise? 'Tis not only Cruelty, or Falsehood, or Injustice to our Neighbours, which the holy Apostle charges Mankind with, in order to lay their Consciences under Guilt and Condemnation, but their Neglects of God and Religion are brought in as a heavy part of the Charge. Rom. iii. 11, 17, 18. *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; there is no fear of God before their Eyes.* You hear the Accusations of this Apostle, speaking in the Name of God to Men, to make them sensible of their Guilt and Misery; you have defrauded the great God of his due Glory; you have done him much Injury in withholding from him Worship and Reverence, Fear and Love, Prayer and Praise; and you fall under the Sentence of his broken Law for ever, if you have no better Plea than this.

## ESSAY

## IV.



Under such a Charge Multitudes would be ready to rise up, and with a thoughtless and inconsiderate Pertness would say, *Far be it from us to injure our Maker when we would not injure or wrong a Worm:* And this is the common Sentiment and Language of Neighbours and Friends when a Man dies, even though he were a Drunkard or a Man of Irreligion. *Alas, for him! Poor Man! he has been honest and just; his Soul is at rest, he never did any body an Injury but himself.* When such Sinners are charged with Neglect of Religion, they cry out as though they were falsely accused, as those *Jews* do in *Mal. iii. 8.* When God complains of them, *Ye have robbed me, saith the Lord;* but they reply'd with Impudence and Ignorance, *Wherein have we robbed or wronged thee?*

Alas, Sirs, you are far from Innocence in this Respect; for you have robbed God of your Hearts and best Affections; you have robbed him of your Thoughts and serious Meditations; you have robbed him of your highest Love and chief Delight. Were all the Passions of your Souls and Powers of Nature given you to be employ'd about the Trifles of this World? Doth not God, in the Person of Divine Wisdom, call to Men in the Book of *Proverbs*, *My Son, give me thy Heart?* And hath not the World had these Hearts of yours given up to it entirely? Doth not the Light of Nature, as well

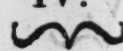


well as our Saviour, say, *Love the Lord your God with your whole Heart, and your whole Soul, with all your Mind, and all your Strength?* And hath God had all this share of Love from you? ESSAY IV.

What time have you ever spent in his Service, in secret Transactions between God and your own Souls? What Seasons have you taken for Prayer to him, or for speaking his Honours? And yet our time is all his: And though he gives us sufficient Portions of time for all our Necessaries and Conveniences of Life, yet have you not robbed God of much of your time in neglecting Religion so entirely as you have done? Have you lived upon the Lord as your Delight and your Life? Have you made him your Hope and your All? Have you daily expected all your Comforts and Blessings from him, and have you returned all the Fruits of your Blessings back again to him in a way of Thankfulness and Obedience? Surely your Consciences must answer, *No*: Then believe it and be afraid; *you have robbed God*, you have injur'd the Almighty, you are far from Innocency, and you must expect to perish with Malefactors, if you have no better Plea than this.

O dismal Change of Apprehensions, when God shall make Creatures, who thought they were innocent, appear abominable in his Sight, guilty of Atheism and Irreligion

ESSAY and high Ungodliness, and shall judge and

IV. sentence and punish them as Criminals of a  
 deep Dye, for *God was not in all their Thoughts, they lived without God in the World.*

Dare not therefore, O Sinners, dare not continue one Day longer in this Practice: Renounce and abandon your false and foolish Hopes: Walk no longer in this vain, this dangerous, this supposed Way of Innocency, for it will never bring you to God and his Favour. Nor go on to think yourself fit for Heaven, because you imagined you had done no wrong on Earth, for upon a serious Search you must be convinced in your Consciences, that you have been evident Transgressors against the Law of God, both in regard of the Duties of Religion and Morality, in what you owe both to God and Man; and Innocency will be found a false and vain Plea at the Bar of God.

But I will go one Step further in making it appear with abundant Evidence, that the Way of pretended Innocency can never bring such Creatures as we are into the Favour of God; and that is, by enquiring of such as call themselves *Christians*; what is the Use of Christianity, and why was it brought into the World? Surely, if Innocence had been the Way to Heaven, *Christ Jesus* the Son of God would never have come into Flesh and Blood, that he might die for us; God would never have sent so  
 glo-

glorious and divine a Person to have ex-  
posed himself to so many Infirmities and  
Sorrows, Fatigues and Sufferings among the  
wretched Inhabitants of this our Globe, if  
we could have been saved in the Way of In-  
nocence. Never would the Son of God  
have entered our World to have been driven  
out of this mortal Life again by cruel and  
bloody Men; nor sustain'd the Shame, the  
Pangs and Agonies of the Cross, and a cursed  
Death. There would have been no new  
Religion introduced by him; there would  
have been no Gospel, for there needed none  
if we are saved by Innocence. The Com-  
ing of the Son of God into our World, his  
painful Circumstances of Life, and his a-  
toning Death at the End of them, sufficient-  
ly prove, that the Law of Innocency can  
never save Mankind.

The Covenant or Law of Innocence was  
broken by our first Parents; our Natures are  
corrupted, and this Law or Covenant is for  
ever weak, and unable to bring us to God  
again. Rom. viii. 3. *What the Law was not  
able to do in that it was weak thro' the Flesh;  
Jesus Christ came to do for us, by coming in  
the Flesh, and making his Soul an Offering  
for Sin.*

If after all this Representation of Things  
you are resolved to continue in this way,  
and seek eternal Life in the way of Inno-  
cence, you give a sensible Affront to the Son



ESSAY of God, who came down from Heaven to

IV. bring Sinners near to God, and you say in effect, he might have spared his Journey to Earth to shew us the Way to Heaven, or to provide a new Way for us, for we have done no Harm to God or Man here in this World, and therefore God will not condemn or hurt us in the other. O my Friends, beg of God to convince you deeply of Sin, and that there is no Hope by all your Pretences of this Kind.

*The second mistaken Way of coming to God is by a mere Dependance on the absolute and sovereign Goodness of his Nature, while you neglect the particular Methods of Salvation which you hear and read he has appointed in the Book of his Grace. 'Tis true, his tender Mercies are over all his Works, and Men imagine this eternal Love to his Creatures will not suffer him to make any of them miserable hereafter, for what they call a little Misconduct here : And while they lessen their own Sins, and enlarge upon his Goodness, they venture their Souls upon an unsafe Foundation, and build up a dangerous and ungrounded Hope. Fancy his Goodness, O Sinners, as large and glorious as you will, and I may venture to affirm it yet larger and more glorious than your Fancy ; but if all your Hopes rest here, and you walk onward in this Confidence, you will never see the Face of God with Comfort ;*

fort; nor arrive at his Favour. Remember *ESSAY*  
 this is spoken particularly, and only, to those *IV.*  
 who have known and heard the Gospel of *Christ*, and yet have neglected to receive it.

Yet how common a Mistake is this, even among those who are called by the *Christian* Name? Many will confess, "We are Sinners indeed, and so are all Men; but God is infinitely merciful, and he will not damn us: Surely he will never condemn so many Millions of Souls; he did not make Mankind to destroy them; his Goodness will not bear to see us eternally miserable, and therefore tho' we do indulge a little Sin here, we shall not perish for ever." Thus that very Sin is committed, which the Apostle warns Men of, *Rom. ii. 4. The Riches of the Goodness and Forbearance and Long-suffering of God which should lead Men to Repentance* are abused to indulge and uphold them in Sin. 'Tis a shameful Indignity and Dishonour done to the Goodness of God, to pretend to trust to it for Salvation from Punishment, and yet neglect the Means this very Goodness hath appointed to obtain it. But I will endeavour to convince you here, that this is not a sufficient or a safe Way.

1. *Infinite Goodness doth not save sinning Angels, and why should it save sinning Men?* Those noble Creatures, who sinned against God, and left their first Station, are for ever

ESSAY ever damned and miserable, and yet God is  
 IV. for ever Good : How largely is his Good-  
 ~~~~~ness diffused thro' all the *Heavenly* World,  
 and he receives endless *Hallelujahs* for it ;  
 how largely on this *Earth*, tho' we often  
 overlook it, and neglect his Praise : But he  
 is not bound to exercise Goodness in Hell  
 too ; nor is his Heart to be charged with  
 Hardness, nor his Hand with Shortness, be-  
 cause he will not save those who deserve  
 Destruction.

2. *Tho' the Goodness of God be infinite in  
 its Nature, yet its Exercises are all regula-  
 ted and limited by Wisdom and Justice ; and  
 these are also infinite. Wisdom hath join'd  
 with Divine Goodness, and saved a Multi-  
 tude of Sinners ; but is it bound to save them  
 all ? Or is it obliged to save you ? Terrible  
 Majesty, Holiness and consuming Fire are  
 with our God ; and among rebellious Crea-  
 tures, his Wisdom finds proper Seasons and  
 Objects where these must have their Exer-  
 cise : And if you are Sinners, why should  
 not his just Vengeance be let out upon you ?  
 It is a dreadful Word which is written, Isa.  
 xxvii. 11. *This is a People of no Understand-  
 ing ; therefore he that made them will not  
 have Mercy on them, and he that formed  
 them will shew them no Favour.* Those who  
 are so ignorant of God and his Way of Sal-  
 vation in the midst of the brightest Means  
 of Knowledge, deserve Destruction from the  
 Al-*



Almighty, as the Fool who says in his Heart ESSAY  
*There is no God.* IV.

3. *There is no Promise in the Gospel made to those that rest on Infinite Goodness, and refuse the Means God has ordain'd to Salvation, i. e. Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.* Goodness, when it is not bound by a Promise, is perfectly free: And, indeed, if it were confin'd always to act to the utmost of its reach, it were not free, nor divine, nor worthy of God. And where there is no divine Faithfulness engaged to support you by a Promise, a Sinner's Hope in Goodness itself will not be a sufficient and effectual Security.

4. *Tho' the Goodness of God is infinite, yet it doth not express itself in all the Ways that it can do in temporal Things, and why must it then be exercised in so unbounded a manner in Things eternal?* If Divine Goodness exerted itself to the utmost in this Life, there would be no Pain, there would be no Sicknes among Men, no Heart-ake, no Sorrow: But you see there is much Sicknes, Sorrow and Pain among us, notwithstanding the boundless Goodness of God. There are ten thousand ways for Infinite Goodness to express itself in, besides in Forgiveness of the Sins of Men.

How do you know that God will forgive any one Sinner, or bestow upon him eternal Life? The Light of Nature cannot assure

ESSAY assure us of it, much less can the Light of  
IV. Nature inform us, that a God of Infinite

Goodness will pardon every Sinner, or save them from the Punishment which is due by his righteous Law. And I am well assured the Scripture gives us no such general Hope: Thousands and Millions will be *punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord Jesus, and from the Glory of his Power*, notwithstanding his own and his Father's unsearchable Treasures of Grace and Goodness. The Lord is abundant in Goodness, and yet Earth and Hell abound in miserable Creatures.

5. *Altho' you could prove that the Mercy of God will pardon some Sinners, yet how can you be sure it will pardon you?* If you were told, that it will save a Million of Transgressors, yet can you ever prove that it will save you? Nay, as highly sovereign as you fancy it to be, you may be still excluded from the Exercise of it; for you may as well imagine this to be one Instance of Sovereignty, to forgive thousands, and yet punish you, if you have nothing else to plead but his mere Goodness. Now it is not wise to venture so important an Interest as that of an Immortal Soul upon any Uncertainty whatsoever, if it can be avoided; and according to your own Principle of Dependence on Sovereign Mercy, you are left at a dreadful Uncertainty,

ty, if you have nothing else to trust to but *ESSAY*  
the mere Sovereignty of Divine Goodness. *IV.*

6. *You have over and over again, by repeated Sins, forfeited all Pretences to the Favour and Mercy of God:* Whatsoever Ground you have had to hope in his Goodness, yet you have cut off all those Grounds by your frequent actual Iniquities. Let us enter into Particulars, and survey a little what Claims, what Pretences you have to trust in this absolute Goodness of God.

(1.) Will you say, *You are his Creature, and he is your Maker and Owner, therefore you trust him to save what is his own?* But remember that every Sin of yours has disowned his Dominion, violated his Authority, and forfeited his Love and all his kind Regards, as a Creator and Proprietor.


(2.) Will you plead, *You have obey'd him, and done much Service for him, and therefore you hope his Goodness will reward you?* But have you not done more against him? Surely your Sins are more than your Acts of Piety, and they cancel all pretended Obligations you could hope to lay upon a God: I fear, should all our Virtues and Devotions be put into the Scale against our Vices and Sins, they would be found greatly wanting in the Weight.

(3.) Will you add this Plea, *You are in a miserable State, and you trust in his Compassion that he will not leave poor sinful wretched*



ESSAY *Beings in a State of Misery?* But have you  
 IV. not affronted him since your Miseries began,  
 ~~~~~ and sinned against him, even in your Bonds?  
 And is not his Compassion thereby utterly  
 forfeited? Besides, might not fallen Angels  
 make the same Plea as you do? Are they  
 not in great Misery? And yet are they not  
 bound in Chains of Darknes, because of  
 their Sins, and shut up to further Ven-  
 geance.

O see what an uncertain Foundation your  
 Souls lean upon, when you venture to trust  
 in the mere absolute Mercy of God, and  
 his Goodness, without his Gospel. 'Tis a  
 Goodness sovereign and absolutely free, and  
 therefore not bound to save such Wretches  
 as you from Misery: 'Tis a Goodness  
 that can see sinning Angels perish for ever,  
 and not help them: 'Tis a Goodness  
 that is regulated in its Exercises, by in-  
 finite Wisdom and Righteousness, and the  
 Authority and Justice of a divine Governor,  
 and these must have their proper Exercises  
 too: It is absolute Goodness without a Pro-  
 mise, without Engagement; Goodness that  
 has ten thousand ways to exercise itself be-  
 sides in forgiving Criminals: It is a Good-  
 ness that may forgive ten thousand Sinners,  
 and not forgive you; and it is a Goodness  
 too, that you have so often dishonour'd,  
 whose Favours you have so shamefully for-  
 feited and abused. Stand and wonder then  
 that

that it is not turned into Fury against you ESSAY  
 long ago without Change and without IV.  
 Hope. 

Surely since I have a Soul of Immortal Duration, I'll strive to have better Rest and Support for it than this is, and never venture it here, since there is a stronger and better Hope. Ye holy and happy Souls that have learnt the new and living Way of coming to the Father, bless him, that he has not left you to seek all your Salvation from absolute and unpromised Goodness: Bless him that has bound his Goodness by many a kind Promise to you in his Gospel, and seal'd it with the Blood of his own Son.

We proceed now to consider the *third false or mistaken Way of coming into the Favour of God*, and that is *by Self-Righteousness*: For when we are made sensible that none is innocent, and the Goodness of God in general is not sufficient Ground enough to raise and support a solid and assured Hope, then we are ready to offer something of our own to God, to engage this general Goodness of his on our Side, and make our Righteousness the way to procure divine Favour, expecting that God should exercise and express his Goodness towards us, in the Blessings of Pardon and Salvation. This *Self-Righteousness* may be divided into four Sorts.

ESSAY I. Penances and Mortifications, Sorrow  
IV. and Regret of Soul, with all our own fancied  
Atonements for Sin.


2. Works of Charity to the Poor.
3. Forms of Religious Worship.
4. Outward Reformation with Vows and Labour after better Obedience.

Let us examine each of these briefly.

1. *Penances and Mortifications, and our own Remorse of Conscience and Regret of Soul, together with many fancied Atonements for Sin*: Thus the Heathens, ancient and modern. What Tortures have some of them inflicted on themselves for the Expiation of their own Sins, or the Sins of their Country? So great and powerful hath been their Sense of the Guilt of Sin, that large Sacrifices, and dreadful ones too, have been proposed by some of them for this Purpose, *Micah. vi. 6, 7. Thousands of Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oil, and some of them have actually offered their First-born for their Transgression, the Fruit of their Body for the Sin of their Souls.*

The Gentiles, when they are a little considerate, one would think, must acknowledge God to be the Governor of the World, and that he is a great and dreadful God, who has, in very visible Instances, sometimes manifested his Displeasure against the Sins of Men, and *revealed his Wrath from Heaven against their Unrighteousness and Ungodliness*:



godliness: And under the Fear and Terror ESSAY  
of his Vengeance they have sometimes put IV.  
on Sackcloth and lived in Ashes: They   
have deny'd themselves the common Food  
of Nature, and half famished their Bodies  
with Abstinence. So the *Ninevites* did at  
the Threatning of the Lord by *Jonah* the  
Prophet. Sometimes they have banish'd  
themselves from Towns and Cities, and all  
Converse with Men, into meer Desarts and  
Caves of the Earth, and strain'd their Limbs  
in painful Postures, for Years together, to  
make Atonement for the Sins of the People;  
so some of the pretended Saints in the *East-Indies*  
have done. They have put them-  
selves in Iron Cages, with sharp Spikes, to  
be carried about and wounded from Head  
to Foot, as some of the *Bonzes* in *China*;  
they have thrown themselves under a heavy  
loaden Chariot of their huge Images and  
Idols, and been crushed to Death, as some  
of their holy Men in *Malabar*. But what  
hath all this avail'd to obtain the Favour  
of that God whom they have offended?  
Who hath required this at their Hands?  
And what Ground have they to think God  
will accept it?

So also those of the *Roman Church*, who  
are fallen from the Doctrine that *St. Paul*  
once wrote to the *Romans*, have invented  
various Penances, and endeavour'd to come  
into the Favour of God by them: As though

ESSAY lashing themselves with Cords, could satisfy  
 IV. infinite Justice for their Crimes, and wearing Sackcloth on their Flesh could make their polluted Souls pure and acceptable to God. In following Ages when the Priests were grown more crafty and covetous, they taught them to come to God by Money, and to buy Pardons for Sin and Titles to Heaven of the Pope. This was called a *Commutation of Penance*, and making their Purse suffer instead of their Flesh; and thus they compounded with the Justice of God for the Sins of their Souls. They lavish away much Silver and Gold, to make Atonement before God for breaking his Law. Poor Attempts and hopeless Pretences, to remove the Displeasure of a God, and make a Way for their favourable Access to him! There have been some austere Persons that have separated themselves from the lawful Customs of the World, and common Comforts of Life, in order to appease their Consciences for past Indulgence and Sensuality, as though God and his Holiness, and his governing Wisdom and Majesty, would be as easily satisfied as their blinded Consciences.

Others again after Sin are terrify'd with Fears of Death and Destruction; and under these Impressions they seem to mourn for their Sins, and then fly to their Repentances and Tears to save them; though perhaps their

their Repentance and Regret of Conscience ESSAY  
 carries no more Hatred of Sin in it than *Ju-* IV.  
*das* had who hang'd himself for inward Vex-  
 ation and Anguish of Soul.

But if this Repentance were never so sincere, is the great God obliged to pardon such repeated Crimes and Iniquities as ours are, merely because the Criminal repents? Do the Princes of the Earth think it necessary to forgive every Rebel and Traytor, because he is sorry he has been guilty of Treason and exposed himself to Punishment? Why then should the King of Kings be bound to let every Criminal pass without being punished, merely because he repents of his Wickedness? It will be said perhaps, we have nothing better to offer than our Repentance. And what then? Must a poor Rebel be always pardon'd because he has nothing to make Satisfaction to his injured Sovereign, besides his own Tears? And yet there are too many who still will hope that their Sins are washed away, and their Guilt atoned for, by their Sorrows and Repentances; and some Christian Divines have expressed themselves a little too grossly and unwarily on this Point.

O let us have a Care of such Mistakes, and bless the Lord, that he hath taught us a better Laver than our own Tears, a more powerful Atonement than any of our Sorrows or Terrors. The Pollutions of the Soul by



ESSAY Sin require a better cleansing, and Affronts  
 IV. to the Majesty of Heaven demand a higher  
 ~~~~~ Satisfaction or Recompence, than any that  
 we can make with our utmost Efforts of this  
 kind.

2. Others fly to *Works of Charity to the Poor*, or of *supposed Piety towards God*, performed either in *Life or at Death*. Hence arise some extraordinary Appearances of Liberality in the World: This Hope of making some Compensation for Sin, lays the Foundation of Churches and Hospitals: And magnificent Structures arise upon the Earth to gain the Favour of the God of Heaven, who hath been provoked by former Iniquities. Whole Estates are sometimes given away by old Sinners, and alienated from their natural Heirs and Possessors, even from needy Friends and Kindred, and are devoted to religious and charitable Uses, in order to purchase Salvation for their Souls.

If they are *Protestants* indeed, we can hardly suppose they have these actual Reasonings within themselves, as to infer, that God will be so much pleased with these Legacies, as to pardon their Sins for the sake of such a Liberality to the Church or the Poor; this is the *Popish* Doctrine of *Merit*, which as *Protestants* we all renounce. But still there is a secret working of this Self-Righteousness in the Hearts of Multitudes: And when upon a Death-bed they

they bequeath large Legacies to the Service of God, or the Relief of the Poor, they hope to breathe out their Spirit comfortably into the Hand of God the Father, with some Dependence on these Legacies, at least as sufficient Evidences of their Love to God, and with confident Expectations of obtaining his Salvation. ESSAY IV.

But alas! what can a little Charity to the Poor do toward the Reconciliation of a God to an offending Creature. Is there any Force in this Reasoning, because I do a Kindness for a Fellow-Worm, therefore my Maker must love me, and forgive me all Affronts against him? Or because I have given to the Service of God, some of those worldly good things which he first bestow'd upon me, therefore he must pardon all my former Iniquities, he must receive me for ever into his Favour, and confer upon me the Riches of Glory and the Inheritance of the Saints in Light? How weak and ignorant are these Reasonings? And yet how many have been ready to lay the Stress of their Hopes upon them, having nothing else within their View to trust in?

3. *Forms and Observances of religious Worship*, are another vain Pillar upon which Sinners lean and support themselves. This is a most common and powerful Deceit. How many thousands are there, that by daily Attendance upon Solemnities of Wor-

ESSAY ship and coming up to the House of God,

IV. hope at last to come to the Arms of the Father with Acceptance? And especially if they have practised secret Devotion too, in the common Rounds and Forms of it, and have frequently bow'd their Knees to God in their Retirements, their Hope has risen high; and though they have not arrived at a thorough change of Heart, and sincere Love to God, yet they will presume upon his Acceptance without any great Concern about the Salvation of *Jesus Christ*.

But let me ask such sort of Candidates for Heaven and Happiness, whether a formal Round of Duties and Services, without the Heart and Soul in them, without sincere Love to God and Delight in him, can so far please the blessed God, as to persuade him to neglect all the righteous Demands of his governing Justice for past Crimes? Or if your Hearts are sometimes engaged in these Solemnities, is this sufficient to cancel all former Transgressions?

Besides, if you have no Mediator, who shall introduce such a Sinner, or his Duties, into the Presence of God with Acceptance? May he not justly drive us with all our solemn Formalities, afar from his Seat, since we neglect the only Hope set before us, *i. e.* the Name of his Son, without which no Man shall come to be accepted of the Father. John xiv, 6. *No Man cometh to the Father but by me.*



4. The last thing I mention, on which **ESSAY** some Persons are prone to depend, in order **IV.** to obtain divine Favour and Forgiveness, is *a Course of outward Reformation, and some Vows and some Endeavours after better Obedience*: But I would endeavour in these few Particulars, to discover the Vanity of all Hopes of this kind.

(1.) Our Duties of Obedience are very imperfect: They do not in any Degree answer the strict Demands of the Law and Justice of God; and the best of them are so defective that they can never claim or pretend to any Merit in them, since they do not come up to answer the Requirements of God in his general Rule of Government.

(2.) Our Obedience of to day cannot wipe away or cancel the Crimes of yesterday or our past Life: These Crimes stand like high and unpassable Mountains in the way betwixt God and us: Paying a new Debt never wipes off old Scores among Men, and why should we imagine it will do so before the Throne of God?

(3.) Were our Duties perfect, yet 'tis not only a guilty, but a worthless Creature, a mere polluted Worm performs them; and the eternal Favour of an offended God is not to be purchased for Rebels at so cheap a rate.

(4.)

## ESSAY

## IV.



(4.) It is true, 'tis by Duties of Worship we must draw near unto God, and by the Acts of our Mind and Will, by Knowledge, Assent, Faith, Trust, Hope, Prayer and Repentance, we must come to God; but 'tis still by and through the Mediation and Interest of *Jesus* the Son, that these Acts of the Soul must be address'd to the Father. These consider'd alone in themselves, are not prescribed in my Text as the Way itself, for *Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life*: He is the only true and living Way to God: These Actions perform'd with a due regard to *Christ*, are properly our walking in the way which God hath appointed; but if we have no regard to *Christ* in these Actions, we are not walking in God's Way, nor can we raise any solid Hope that we shall arrive at his gracious Presence, while we neglect or refuse the only Way which God has ordained.

Perhaps some more intelligent or more conceited Hearers, may cry out here, why are these Rudiments and plain Principles of Christianity preached to us? Surely we know better, and understand more of the Gospel of *Christ*, than to make such Discourses necessary for us to attend them.

I answer, 1. However learned some may be in these Truths, yet perhaps there may be others coming continually into our Assemblies, who know little enough either of the

Law

Law or Gospel; and they had need of the **ESSAY**  
 Doctrines of their own Guilt, and Misery, **IV.**  
 and Danger, to be spoken in very plain and  
 clear Language to them, before they will  
 hearken and stand still, and consider their  
 own Circumstances, and their Peril: And  
 the Nature of Man when under the Awaken-  
 ings of Conscience, is so prone to take hold  
 of every false and feeble Refuge, and to  
 venture their Eternal Hopes upon them,  
 that it is very necessary to speak these things  
 often, and to represent them in the clearest  
 Light, in order to caution Sinners against  
 building their Hopes on the Sand, and rest-  
 ing all their Expectation of the Favour of  
 God and Happiness, upon some feeble  
 Foundation which will not bear them. 'Tis  
 not the Wise and the Learned that I pre-  
 tend to instruct; but it is pity any poor Soul,  
 even of the lowest Ranks of Mankind,  
 should abide ignorant of these important  
 Concerns, and should perish in such a Land  
 of Light, and for want of *Christian* Know-  
 ledge.

*Ans. 2.* Let us search diligently our own  
 Hearts: Have we all attained and kept up  
 such a due Sense of our Danger without  
*Christ* as we should have? Are we never  
 inclined to depend on Self-Righteousness at  
 all? Are we never under any Temptation  
 to indulge this false Hope? Some pious Souls  
 have complain'd of this Temptation, and  
 corrupt



ESSAY corrupt Nature is very ready in the best of

IV. *Christians*, to build up some Parts of their own Righteousness as their sufficient Refuge, and sometimes to put it in place of the perfect Mediation and Atonement of the Blessed *Jesus*.

*Ans. 3.* However the Case be now with us, and if we have truly got the Victory over all Temptations of this Kind, yet it is very proper to remember what once we were, and reflect upon what false Hopes we once were ready to build on, and to bless the Holy Spirit of Light and Grace, that hath discover'd our Mistakes unto us, that has turned our Feet from every dangerous Hope, and led us to the Father by the true and living way *Christ Jesus*.

Let this Thought also call us to mourn over the Souls of Men, even the greatest Part of our Fellow Creatures, Inhabitants of this World, who are made of the same Flesh and Blood as we are, and who, thro' gross Ignorance, are ever practising some foolish Methods of pacifying God for past Sins, and aiming at his Favour and Happiness in such Ways as will never attain their End. O come, Lord *Jesus*, and spread thy Light and thy Truth thro' the dark Nations, and scatter all the remaining Mists and Darkneses that lie upon Countries which have only the Name of *Christ*, and some of the Forms of his Religion

ligion among them. Thousands there are, *ESSAY*  
 even in *Europe*, who neither know the *IV.*  
 Gospel in Truth, nor come to God by this  
 Mediator: They live not by the Faith of  
 the Son of God, nor have just Reason,  
 according to the Gospel, to expect divine  
 Favour and Forgiveness. Blessed God, en-  
 lighten the Thousands of dark and wretched  
 Mankind, and lead them in thine appointed  
 Way to Happiness.

## ESSAY

The next *Essay* will shew us a plain and easy Account  
 of *Faith in Christ*, or of coming to God by *Christ*: I ac-  
 knowledge, I have been sometimes uneasy and ashamed  
 to hear a Divine of the *Protestant* Church tell his People,  
 that *Faith in Christ* is a mysterious Thing, and it is not  
 to be well known, or clearly conceived in itself, but it  
 may be much better conceived by its Effects, therefore,  
 saith he, I proceed, instead of speaking of *Faith itself*, to  
 give you an Account of the *Fruits* and *Effects* of it.

As tho' there was any thing in the Affairs of human  
 Life, in Reason, or in Religion, clearer than this Notion,  
 (*viz.*) Upon a Sight and Sense of our Sins and Dangers,  
 and our Weakness to help ourselves, to commit our-  
 selves into the Hands of *Christ*, by an humble Act of  
 Trust or Dependance on him, complying with his ap-  
 pointed Methods of Relief in the Gospel.

'Tis but as a Man sensible of his Sickness applies  
 himself to a wise and knowing Physician, and gives  
 himself up to him, and trusts himself in his Hands to re-  
 lieve him, complying with the Remedies appointed in  
 order to his Cure: which I hope will appear very plain  
 in the following *Essay*.

## ESSAY V.

*A plain and easy Account of a Sinner's coming to God by JESUS CHRIST, or of saving Faith in CHRIST JESUS.*

JOHN xiv. 6.

*No Man cometh to the Father but by me.*

**I**NNOCENT Man in the Day of his Creation had a Liberty of drawing near to God his Maker, and of delightful Converse with him in a more immediate manner; but Man having fallen from God, and becoming guilty in his Person, and sinful in his Nature, dwells in this World afar off from God; and yet sometimes would attempt to approach him, and obtain his Favour again merely by his own Powers and Performances; as tho' the Goodness of God would receive him again into his Presence, and into his Love in the same manner as before. Sinful Mankind have been often trying to make their way to God in  
and



and of themselves: Thence arise those va-  
 rious *mistaken Grounds of Hope*, of which ESSAY V.  
 we have given an Account in the former  
 Discourse: But the Blessed God has suffi-  
 ciently informed us in the Word of his  
 Gospel, that it is in vain for us to hope to  
 draw near to God, our offended Sovereign,  
 without a Mediator; and there is *but one*  
*Mediator* of God's Appointment *between God*  
*and Man*, and that is *the Man Christ Jesus*,  
 1 Tim. ii. 5. and *No Man cometh to the*  
*Father but by him*, John xiv. 6.

Now in order to explain *what it is for*  
*Sinners to come to God the Father by Jesus*  
*Christ*, let us consider that all saving Ap-  
 proaches of the Creature unto God, depend  
 on God's Approaches to the Creature: He  
 first draws us by his Grace, and then we  
 follow. Jer. xxxi. 3. *I have loved thee with*  
*an everlasting Love, therefore with Loving-*  
*kindness have I drawn thee.* 1 John iv. 19.  
*If we love him it is because he loved us first.*  
 If our Souls are set a moving towards him,  
 it is because his Heart, his Pity and his Love  
 moved first towards us.

In the Reconciliation of God and his sin-  
 ful Creatures, there must be a mutual Ap-  
 proach, and a mutual Nearness; but it must  
 be remember'd, that the Sinners coming  
 nigh to God, is but an Eccho or Answer to  
 the merciful Voice of God coming nigh to  
 him: And the same Method in which we  
 may

EssAY may suppose the great God to draw near to  
 V. Sinners, the same Steps should we take in  
 ~~~~~ drawing near to God.

It must be granted, indeed, that all the Acts of God are eternal, and his Decrees have no Order of Succession as they are in him: The eternal Mind conceives the Ends and Beginnings of all things at once; but there are many Expressions in Scripture which condescend to our Frailty, and teach us to conceive of the infinite and eternal Things of God by way of Time and Succession, that we may obtain a fuller and clearer Understanding of them; for no created Mind is capacious enough to grasp all the divine Decrees in one single Thought, as that God does who formed them.

It should be observed also, that tho' the Actions of the Soul of Man are generally produced in a successive Way, yet sometimes two or three of these Acts are so swift in their Succession, and so nearly simultaneous, or at the same Moment that they are blended together, or are so interwoven in many Cases, that it is hard to say, which is first, and which is last: And many times also, in one and the same Act of the Soul, there are such different Views and Designs concurring, as may make it look like two or three distinct Actions: So *returning to God by Jesus Christ* includes in it both *Repentance*, with all the Acts contained therein,

in, as well as *Faith*, with all its subordinate *Essays* Motions : It is *Repentance* as it is a Return V. to God ; it is *Faith* as *Jesus Christ* is the Medium of this Return. I put in this Caution here, only to shew, that we are not to expect every single Sinner that returns to God by *Jesus Christ*, must have all these particular Motions of the Soul, or all these Transactions sensibly passing thro' his Mind, and that in the same Order as is here represented ; yet the Representation of these Things in some rational Order, may greatly help the Conception of the whole, and give Persons somewhat of a more clear and more distinct Idea of it.

Let us then here take a Survey of those several Steps, whereby God may be supposed to draw near to fallen Man, in order to his Recovery, and thereby we shall learn what correspondent Steps Sinners must take, in order to their coming to God.

1. The Blessed God surveying his lower Creation, beheld all Mankind as Creatures in general fallen from his Image and his Love, and at a wide and dreadful Distance from their Creator. Compare the XIVth Psalm 2, 3. Verses with Rom. iii. 9, 10, &c. The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the the Children of Men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God : they are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy ; there is none that doth Good, no, not



ESSAY one. This Text of the Psalmist is cited by  
 V. the Apostle in *Rom. iii. 9, 10, &c.* to prove  
 that all Mankind is afar off from God by  
 Nature; and therefore I may justly use this  
 Scripture, to prove that God *beheld us* in  
 this fallen Estate; he saw us lie under the  
 righteous Condemnation of his broken Law,  
 justly exposed to Misery, and deserving his  
 Indignation and Wrath, under a Sentence  
 of Death, and yet still going farther from  
 him without his Fear or his Love.

Now in correspondence with this View,  
 which God has taken of the Children of  
 Men, in their Guilt and Misery in general;  
 we also, in order to our Recovery, must be  
 brought to see ourselves *guilty and miserable*,  
 we must see ourselves destitute of the Image  
 and the Love of God in our fallen State of  
 Nature, if ever we would return to him by  
*Christ* and Grace.

God, who is essentially happy in being for  
 ever near himself, and one with himself,  
 has made the Happiness of his Creatures to  
 depend on their being near to him, and  
 their Union with him; and he knows it is  
 Misery enough to be afar off from God:  
 So must we be made deeply sensible of our  
 Wretchedness and Misery in the Loss of the  
 Favour and Image of God, and in our  
 dreadful State of Distance and Estrangedness  
 from him. We must behold ourselves ex-  
 posed to the Wrath of God, and under Sen-  
 tence

tence of just Condemnation and Death, because of Sin. We must see it so as to feel it, and be affected with it at our Heart; we must have such an Impression of it made upon our Souls, so as never to be satisfied to continue in such a State, and be restless in seeking some way of Recovery, as I shall shew more particularly afterwards.

2. The great God surveying his own glorious Perfections in himself, and the just Rights of his Government, taking a View also of the Holiness, Justice and Wisdom of his Law, which sinful Man had grievously dishonoured and affronted by Disobedience; he did not think it proper for himself as the Supreme Governor of the World, to receive sinful Creatures into his Favour again, without *some signal Honour done to his broken Law and his Authority*; as a sort of righteous Recompence for the Affront and Dishonours done thereto by the Offence of his Creatures. It became the great God to make his Law appear wise and just, by demanding such a Reparation of the Dishonour done to it.

But he found *all Mankind utterly incapable of making any such Recompence*, since all that they could do for time to come was but their known Duty to their Creator, and none of their Sufferings short of Destruction and eternal Death could make Atonement.

ESSAY or Satisfaction for the Sins that were past :

V. And in this View of things the great God did, as it were, pronounce the Recovery of his Creature Man, by all his own Powers and Capacities, altogether hopeless, and that his Recovery must arise only from divine Grace.

In correspondence to this View of Things in the Eye of God, we should also set before our own Eyes the Holiness, Justice and Wisdom of the Law of our Creator, in order to make ourselves deeply sensible of our great Guilt, in breaking his Law, and our *Desert of Death* by the Transgression of it : We should also be made sensible in some measure of the *Right of his divine Authority and Government to demand some Satisfaction for our Offences*, before we be received into his Favour again. The very Workings of natural Conscience under a Sense of Guilt, seem to be an Impression from the God of Nature on the Mind of Man, that Sin deserves Punishment, because the Law of a God broken, requires some Reparation of Honour\*.

On  
\* This is so universal in all Ages among the confederate Part of Mankind, that the *Heathens* themselves, in their own Circumstances, thought a *Nemesis* or vindictive Indignation of God would attend on Sinners. *Acts* xxviii. 4. They thought St. Paul was a *Murderer*, and therefore *Vengeance* followed him. And this set them upon various and foolish Inventions, to make Atonement for Sin: Nor is it to be supposed,



On this Account we ought to reflect on *ESSAY* ourselves as the more miserable and helpless *V.* in our guilty State, because we are utterly incapable to make any Atonement for our own Sins, or to repair the Dishonour that hath been done to God's holy Law and his Authority thereby. We must look upon our Circumstances therefore as hopeless in ourselves, and acknowledge that all our Hope is in the free Grace and Mercy of God. *Every Mouth must be stopped* on this Account, and *all the World lie* at the Foot of God, as *guilty before him*, as justly exposed to his Indignation, and unable to procure his Favour.

3. The great God saw it also impossible to bring Sinners near to himself, and make them Partakers of his Favour and Happiness, *without a Change of their corrupt Natures, an intire Alteration of their vicious Affections*, and an universal Turn of Heart from Sin to God. In our present fallen and sinful State, God beheld our Hearts so a-

P 3

verse

posed, that the Craft of Priests alone, could so easily and so universally have imposed on the Nations their Self-Punishments, and their expensive Sacrifices of Atonement, if there had not been something in the natural Consciences of Mankind, which told them they wanted an Atonement for Sin. And in this Respect the Workings of natural Conscience should be encouraged, and kept awake, and sensible of the Wrath of God, which Sin deserves, and that God will require some Satisfaction to his injured Law and Government.

ESSAY verse to all that is holy and divine, that we  
 V. could never be fit for Converse with him, or  
 the Enjoyment of him as a God of Holiness,  
 without being renew'd after his Image and  
 Likeness, and possessed of a sincere Love to  
 him.

And he also beheld these guilty sinful  
 Creatures *utterly incapable of recovering  
 themselves to his Image by a Change of their  
 Natures*, and by a thorough Conversion of  
 their Hearts from Sin, and the Creature to  
 God and Holiness: So that this is another  
 Obstacle in the Sight of God to our Recon-  
 ciliation, and which we of ourselves cannot  
 surmount.

In the same manner, in order to our Re-  
 covery, we must look upon ourselves in our  
 fallen State, as *unfit for Correspondence with  
 God*, incapable of enjoying Happiness in his  
 Presence, by reason of the Opposition of  
 our Will to his Holiness, and to our Duty,  
 we must be sensible of the great Carnality  
 of our Affections cleaving to earthly Things,  
 and to the tempting Vanities of this Life,  
 choosing them for our Portion and our Hap-  
 piness instead of God.

And we must be acquainted also *how  
 weak and feeble all our own Efforts are to  
 work this mighty and universal change of  
 Nature in us*, to form our Spirits anew, and  
 to rectify all the Moral Disorders in them:  
 We must be made sensible how incapable  
 we

we are of giving our Souls a new Bent and ESSAY  
 Biass toward things divine and heavenly, V.  
 instead of that sinful Propensity which works  
 in our Natures, and is ever leading us astray  
 from God and true Happiness; so that if ever  
 we are recovered, we must depend entirely  
 upon the free Grace and Mercy of God for our  
 whole Recovery; not only to provide a Satis-  
 faction for his own injur'd Law and Autho-  
 rity, but also to take away the Perverseness and  
 Obstinacy of our Wills, and to change our  
 vile Affections into holy and heavenly.

This is that Poverty of Spirit, that Sensi-  
 bility of our own helpless State, which is  
 the first Foundation of the Kingdom of God  
 within us. So our Saviour teaches, Matt.  
 v. 3. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs  
 is the Kingdom of God.* This is that Hu-  
 mility of Soul which the Men of *Laodicea*  
 wanted, *Rev. iii. 17.* When they were  
 really great Sinners before God; they  
*supposed themselves rich, and increased in  
 Goods, and wanting nothing:* But before  
 they were recovered it was necessary they  
 should see *they were Poor and Blind, and  
 Wretched and Naked.*

4. Though God beheld Mankind in  
 these deplorable and helpless Circumstances,  
 yet he was pleased, out of his free Grace, to  
*decree and determine, that they should not all  
 perish.* He resolved to bring some off at  
 least, out of their State of Distance from him,  
 and to restore them to his Favour and his



ESSAY Image, to Holiness and Happiness. Whe-  
 V. V ther this gracious Will and Design of God,  
 be so clearly and sufficiently discover'd, to  
 the Light of Nature, in his providential  
 Goodness to all the World, I will not now  
 debate: But it is sufficiently discover'd in  
 the Gospel, or the Book of Grace.

In correspondence with this gracious De-  
 sign and Determination of the blessed God,  
 'tis necessary that we also should have some  
*Hope and Belief of God's Willingness to be*  
*reconciled,* or that there is Grace and Com-  
 passion with him for returning Sinners.  
 Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh to God must*  
*believe that he is a Rewarder of those that*  
*diligently seek him:* And in this View, Be-  
 lief and Hope, we should resolve never to  
 rest and continue in such deplorable Circum-  
 stances: But desire and strive with all our  
 Powers to return to God, and never be  
 content without obtaining his Favour and  
 his Image, we should humbly resolve and  
 determine that we will not perish, but that  
 we will return to the great God, through  
 the Aids and Encouragements of his Grace,  
 in what way and manner soever he is pleased  
 to return unto us. In this Sense we may  
 say that *the Kingdom of Heaven, or the*  
*Blessings of Salvation suffer Violence,* as our  
 Saviour expresses it, Matt. xi. 12. *And the*  
*Violent take it by Force.*

This holy Desire with some Degree of  
 Resolution, seems to be the first Step or  
 Motion

Motion of the *Will* towards God; these are *ESSAY*  
the Beginnings of true Repentance flowing V.  
from Faith or Hope in divine Mercy; this  
is the first Work of a saving Conversion,  
even a Restlessness of Soul in this State of  
Distance from God, and under the Hope of  
his Mercy, a sincere Desire and holy Reso-  
lution of Heart to return towards him, as  
our Portion and our everlasting Happiness.  
This is that *Repentance towards God, and*  
*Faith in his Mercy*, which was necessary in  
all Ages, and in all Nations, and under  
every Dispensation, in order to the Salvation  
of sinful Mankind from their State of Misery,  
and in order to return to God.

5. When God design'd to recover Man  
to himself, and restore him to his Favour, he  
design'd also to secure a due Honour to his  
Government for all times to come, and Obedi-  
ence to his Authority in all his future De-  
mands: And for this End Man must be made,  
in some measure, to feel the Evil of Sin by  
the painful Consequences of it, viz. *Shame*  
*and Remorse of Conscience, and holy Sorrow*  
*for his past Transgressions*: And God design'd  
that these Actings of the Soul should have  
a powerful and a lasting Influence, through  
his Grace, to make Man hate every Sin, and  
fear and avoid it, and awaken him to con-  
stant sincere Endeavours of universal Obe-  
dience to a forgiving God for time to come.

Agree-

## ESSAY

## V.

*some Measure, painfully affected with Shame and Sorrow, for his past Folly and Disobedience to his Creator; and must learn hereby to hate every Sin, and constantly avoid it, and he must endeavour after universal Compliance with the Will of God in all future Instances of Duty.* These are the natural and necessary Operations and Attendants of all true Repentance wheresoever it is found, and will be in greater or less Degrees, working in the Heart of every Sinner that truly returns to God: For the great Design of God in all his Transactions of Grace towards fallen Man, is to recover to himself *a peculiar People, averse to Sin and zealous of Good Works*, and that under the Motives of his pardoning Love, and the Aids of his sanctifying Grace, they walk before him in all Holiness.

This also belongs to all the several Dispensations of the Grace of God ever since the Fall of Man, and is required of every Creature who should return to God.

6. In the New Testament the great God hath made much plainer Discoveries of the particular way of his return to sinful Man (*viz.*) that *he did not think fit to be reconciled to Men, or bring them back again to himself, without a Mediator* \*. This was intimated

\* There may be several Reasons why the blessed God thought fit to save Mankind by a Mediator, and not without



in God's earliest Revelations of his Grace, *ESSAY*  
when he spake of the *Seed of the Woman*, *V.*  
which should *break the Head of the Serpent*,  
and destroy the Designs of the Tempter to  
ruin Mankind: But under the *Christian* Dis-  
pensation it is much more abundantly mani-  
fested: And finding no other Person suffi-  
cient for this Work, God chose his own Son  
to become a Mediator between God and Man;  
even that Son of his Love, who was *one with*  
*the Father*, and *lay in his Bosom* and *had Glo-*  
*ry with him* there, *before the Foundation of*  
*the World*, that Son in *whom dwelt all the*  
*Fulness of the Godhead*, even that Son *by whom*  
*he created the World and Mankind at first*;  
it was by him, as a Mediator, that he de-  
sign'd to recover Man from his Ruins, his  
Guilt and his Wretchedness.

without one, as (1) To maintain his own Honour and  
the Dignity of his Majesty; for it does not seem so proper  
for a God of such supreme Glory, to admit such Cri-  
minals immediately into his Favour, and his Presence,  
and his Embraces, without some honourable Mediator  
to introduce them. (2) To do sublime Honour to his  
Son *Jesus Christ*, who is the express Image of his Per-  
son and his first Favourite, that as by him God made  
the World, so by him Mankind should be recovered,  
new-created, and restored to God's Favour and Image  
again. (3) To secure the Salvation of Man more ef-  
fectually, uniting all the saved Number in one unfaill-  
ing and all-sufficient Head: And therefore his own Son  
was chosen for this Office, as being able to undertake  
all that was necessary completely to bring back Man to  
God.

This

ESSAY

V. This was the *Messiah* whom God promised to *Abraham*, who should be one of his Posterity, and in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed. This was he whom God spoke of, and recommended by many of the Prophets, and described under several Types and Figures in ancient Ages, that when he came he might be better known and accepted by the World. This was he who in the Fulness of Time, was sent to take Flesh and Blood upon him, and to become a compleat Man. This is the one and only Mediator between God and Man, even the Man *Christ Jesus*, who was also one with God.

For this End it pleased the Father to furnish him with every necessary Talent and Qualification: He anointed him with his holy Spirit to dwell in him without Measure; he appointed him to be born of a Woman in low Circumstances of Life, and to grow up through all the Stages of Infancy, Childhood, and Youth, to the Manly Age of Thirty; then he called and commissioned him to be a publick Prophet and Teacher of the Gospel, or the Way of Salvation: He set him up also for an Example of Humility and Love towards God and Man, and of Holiness, Submission and Patience, and universal Obedience through the Course of his Life, and then appointed him to die as an atoning Sacrifice for the Sins of Men: God laid our Sins upon him, and set him forth, or fore-

fore-determin'd him to be a Propitiation for Sin through Faith or Trust in his Blood. V.

This is he whom God raised from the Dead and exalted him at his right Hand, to be an Intercessor for sinful Man there, in the Virtue of his Sacrifice, and to be the Head of vital Influence to Men, to work Repentance and Holiness in their Hearts, as well as to be a Prince, or Lord and Saviour, to bestow Forgiveness of Sins.

God gave him also Power to Rule and Govern all things for the Good of his People, and ordained him to be Judge of the World at the great Day. And all this was designed of God, that his Son, Jesus the Mediator, might answer every Necessity, and be able to supply every Want of sinful Man, in order to his complete Salvation.

Now in Correspondence with these Counsels of God the Father, in order to bring fallen Man near to himself, Sinners must believe the Truth and Certainty of God's Appointment, that they shall not come to him again without a Mediator; and they must have a certain and well-settled Perswasion of this Divine Constitution.

It is granted that there have been some such Thoughts among Mankind, in all Ages: They have had some Notion of coming to God by a Mediator, from an awful Sense of the Majesty and Holiness of God, and of their own Vileness and Unworthiness, and their



ESSAY their Desert of his Displeasure because of Sin.

V. So *Job*, when he had described his own Sinfulness, in the Sight of a pure and holy God, Chap. ix. ver. 30, 31. he adds, *God is not a Man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in Judgment; neither is there any Days-man betwixt us, that might lay his Hand upon both; for Job had not a clear Light at this time, of the great Mediator who was appointed, though 'tis plain he saw that he wanted one.*

So again the *Israelites* at mount *Sinai*, when they saw God in his terrible Appearances of Thunder and Lightning, and a Voice came from the Fire, they said, *Let not God speak to us lest we die, but let Moses speak to us and we will hear.* Exod. xx. 19. they declare they wanted a Mediator.

The *Heathens* had their lower Deities who were supposed, even by the Philosophers, to be Mediators between them and the supreme God.

Besides, God transacts his great Affairs with Mankind, oftentimes according to the Language, Customs, and Manners of Men. Now 'tis the natural and common way of Offenders, against a Superior, to get some Mediator to speak for them, and bring them into Favour again.

Mankind also, in order to this Reconciliation, must have some Knowledge of this Mediator: They must be acquainted with  
the

the most important Articles which God has revealed concerning this great Mediator Christ *Jesus*. ESSAY V.

We are called to behold him and to survey him in the Glory of his Personal Excellencies, in his original Fitness for this Work of a Reconciler, and in the several Offices which God has commissioned him to sustain, as just before described. We must be made to see the blessed *Jesus* in the Riches of his Grace, and his large and various Furniture for this great Undertaking: We must believe what God has pronounced concerning him, and from the bottom of our Hearts humbly approve of these Counsels for our Salvation. It must be the Language of our Hearts in a way of Eccho to the Appointment of God, "There is none like him, there is none like *Christ*, for a Reconciler of the offended God and offending Man; he is every way a suitable Relief to our Wants, and all-sufficient to save."

We must see him as one that has made full Atonement or Satisfaction to the Justice and Majesty of God, for the Sins of Men by his own Sufferings and Death\*: We must approve

\* Though it is not necessary for every Person among the fallen Race of *Adam*, to find out the real and eternal Necessity of his coming to God by a Mediator, or that such an Atonement must needs be made for the Sins of Men, yet since God saw it most proper to appoint this way, and to ordain his Son *Jesus* to be this Mediator

ESSAY approve of him as our great Teacher, and  
 V. our glorious Example; as our High-Priest  
 ~~~~~ to reconcile us to God by his Blood, and to  
 make Intercession for us at the Mercy-Seat in  
 Heaven; as *one that is able to save to the ut-  
 termost, because he lives forever* to fulfil all  
 his Offices. We must behold him as a  
 Lord and Governor appointed to rule over  
 us, and to give us Laws, and to defend us  
 from our Enemies: We must see him as  
 the most proper Person to be our Head of  
 vital Influence, for the Communication of  
 all Grace and Holiness to us, for the chang-  
 ing of our Natures into his Father's Image  
 and his own; and as one that is able and  
 willing to take Care of us through this  
 World, and bring us safe into the Father's  
 Presence at last with exceeding Joy. Thus  
 the Faith of the Sinner eccho's to the Voice  
 of God concerning *Jesus* the Saviour, in a  
 way of Assent to what God has reveal'd,  
 and in a way of humble Approbation of  
 what God has appointed.

7. The great God foreseeing the Obsti-  
 nacy, Corruption and Wickedness of the  
 Heart of Man, well knew that all this Pre-

Mediator and this Atonement, and to reveal it in so  
 many plain and exprefs Declarations of his Word, I  
 think it may be readily agreed, that it is our evident  
 Duty, now we know this Gospel, to approve of this  
 Atonement so plainly revealed, and this Mediator, as  
 a most reasonable Appointment, and to come near to  
 God by him, even by *Faith in his Blood*, if we would  
 find certain Acceptance with God.

paration



paration to restore Mankind to Holiness and Happiness, might at last be ineffectual, and might all be perform'd in vain, unless he took one Step further; and therefore to secure this Salvation to many *he gave them into the Hands of his Son Jesus Christ, and committed the Care of their Salvation to him; he gave them to Christ, or entrusted him with the Care of them, that he might fulfil his whole Commission, and all his various Offices, in a most effectual and powerful manner with regard to them; appointing also that this same Gospel should be preached to the rest of Mankind, and the Offers of this Salvation should be made to them some way or other, in various Seasons, in plainer or darker Discoveries thereof. Therefore though the Gospel be sent to be preached to all the World in general, and Salvation to be offer'd them through Jesus Christ, yet we are told often by the Evangelist John, of those particular Persons whom the Father had given unto Christ, that they might be his, i. e. his Seed, his Subjects, and his willing People.*

In Conformity to this great Act of the Father in committing the Souls of Men into the Hands of Christ, we also having seen him all-sufficient for this Work, must commit our Souls into his Hand, as one able to keep what we commit to him until the last Day: We must resign ourselves unto him,

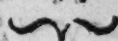
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as

ESSAY  
V.

ESSAY as a glorious Undertaker for our Salvation:

V. We must receive him, or be willing to submit to him, in all his appointed Offices of Prophet, Priest, King, Example, Head of Influence, &c. that we may receive from him every thing that we stand in need of, in order to our being brought home to God in Heaven. We must trust in him as a *Prince and Saviour, exalted to give Repentance to Sinners, and Forgiveness of Sins.* We must trust in him as the great *Propitiation for our Sins*, our *Peace-Maker*, and the Procurer of our Pardon; we must live upon him as our *Head* of vital Influence, to change our sinful Natures, and to work the Principles of all Grace in us by his holy Spirit, and to preserve them in opposition to all our Corruptions: We must depend on what he hath done and suffer'd for us, as the ground of our Acceptance with God, and we must seek to him to form our Natures so far in the Likeness of God, as to fit us for Happiness in the Enjoyment of God for ever. We must commit the important Affairs of our Souls to him, as one that is able to take care of them, and to carry them safely through all the Temptations and Dangers of the present Life; and we must trust in him to receive our departing Spirits at Death, to raise our Bodies from the Dust at the last Day, and to make our whole Natures completely holy and happy, in the Favour and

Image of God for ever: All this belongs ESSAY to his Commission which he received from V. the Father. 

This is that great Act of *Christian Faith, Trust, Hope or Dependance*, which we are so often called to perform in the New Testament, which is foretold by the Prophets of old, and upon which our Salvation is so much represented to depend, in the Writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles.

8. If I were to add any thing to what has been already said, it should be this, (*viz.*) that as God the Father has appointed his Son *Jesus Christ* to be the great and general Medium of our Restoration and Return to his Favour, Image and Happiness, so he has appointed that in all our particular *Addresses, and Applications to himself, in a way of Prayer or Trust, Thanksgiving or Praise, we should make use of the Name* of his Son *Jesus*, as the only valuable and worthy Foundation for our hope of Acceptance; that so *Jesus Christ* the Son, as well as the Father, may be honour'd and glorified throughout the whole Course of our Religion in our way to Heaven.

And since this is the constant Design, and the express Appointment of the Father, 'tis necessary that we comply therewith, in all our Addresses to God: *We must come unto the Father by him in every part of Worship: By him we must believe, or trust in God;*



ESSAY we must *pray to the Father in his Name,*

V. we must *ask Forgiveness* of our Sins *for his Sake*: It is by him we must offer up our Sacrifices of Thanksgiving and Praise; and by him we must present all our Services of Obedience, and *whatsoever we do in Word or Deed*, must be all *in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that we may be accepted of the Father, and that the Father may be glorified in his Son.

This is the Appointment of the blessed God, and this must be our Practice till we come to the Fulness of this Salvation in Heaven, where we shall dwell for ever in the Presence of God, and where we shall join with all the holy and happy Tribes of Mankind, of every Age and Nation, in ascribing Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Praise, to him that sits upon the Throne, as our reconciled God, and to the Lamb for ever, as our glorious and successful Mediator. *Amen.*

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ESSAY

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## ESSAY VI.

*A View of the manifold Salvation of Man by JESUS CHRIST, represented in order to reconcile Christians of different Sentiments.*

### INTRODUCTION.

**M**Ankind by Nature lies under the Ruins of the Fall, both as *Guilty* and as *Sinful*. We are guilty in our *Persons*, and exposed to the divine Anger, as well as sinful in our *Natures*, and ever ready to break his holy Law. Whosoever therefore becomes our complete Saviour must relieve us under both these Distresses.

As we are *guilty* in the Sight of God, we are condemned in the Court of his Law and Justice, we are liable to bear the Punishment due to our Sins, and we have lost all Pretence of Right to the Favour of God and Eternal Life. Now our blessed Lord *Jesus Christ*, who has undertaken the Work of our Salvation, is an all-sufficient Saviour in every Respect; by his Obedience, Death

ESSAY and Intercession, he relieves us from the  
 VI. Guilt of Sin, and so delivers us from all Obligations to the Punishments of Hell: He reconciles us to God, and gives us a Right to Life and Salvation in the heavenly World.

As we are *sinful* Creatures we are ever ready to offend God afresh, and are utterly unfit for his heavenly Presence: And *Christ* saves us in this Respect, by changing our vicious Nature and Temper, sanctifying us by his Grace or holy Spirit, so that we may be prepar'd for the Enjoyment of God in heavenly Places.

In these two things the Substance of our Salvation chiefly consists: And since these divine Affairs could not be so well understood by us, according to those sublime Ideas by which God the Father and his Son transact them in their Eternal Counsels and their subsequent Dispensations, therefore God has been pleas'd to reveal them to us under such Ideas or Representations, and in such Forms of Language, as are borrow'd from our common Affairs in human Life; and that not only by *one* Figure or Emblem, but by many Representations thereof, that we might view them on all Sides, and have a fuller Knowledge of them, so far as is sufficient for our present State, or necessary to our Salvation.

S E C T.



S E C T. I.

*The Characters of Christ as our Deliverer  
from the Sinfulness of our Natures.*

*First*, Let us take a very brief Survey of this Matter, as our Lord *Jesus Christ* delivers us from our *sinful Natures*, or the Power of Sin that works in us, for he is our *Sanctification* as well as our *Righteousness*. 1 Cor. i. 30.

Our blessed Saviour in this Respect, is sometimes represented as our almighty *Redeemer*, who rescues us from the Power of *Satan*, and of our own Lusts, by the more powerful Influences of his Spirit: He is our *Sanctifier*, who renews the Image of God in us, which was lost by our first Apostacy, and this he does by his sovereign creating Power, for we are *created anew to good Works*, in or by *Christ Jesus*. He is sometimes set forth as our *Prophet*, to give us Light and the Knowledge of God, and of the way of Salvation, by the divine Instructions of his Gospel. He is our *Example* to go before us, and to mark out for us the Path of Duty and Holiness by his own Footsteps, and to encourage our walking therein by his Precedency, and so he is also our *Forerunner* to Heaven. *Christ* is also our *King* to give us Laws and Rules of Life, and to rule in our Hearts by giving us an

ESSAY Inclination to obey his Laws: By his royal  
 VI. Power also in his exalted State, he subdues  
 Sin in us, he mortifies our unruly Appetites  
 and Passions which are his Enemies; he  
 brings every Power of our Nature into Obe-  
 dience and Subjection to himself. He fits  
 us for the heavenly Kingdom, and actually  
 bestows upon us this final Happiness. He  
 is also represented in Scripture as our *Vital*  
*Head*, or Head of spiritual Life, and Be-  
 lievers are his *Members*; and so his Spirit be-  
 comes the Spring of spiritual Life in us, re-  
 newes our sinful Nature, raises us from Death  
 in Trespasses and Sins, conveys a new and  
 divine Life to us, and will at last, by the  
 same Spirit, raise our Bodies from the Dead  
 to live forever with him.

Thus much concerning one Branch of  
 our Salvation, (*viz.*) the *Recovery of our*  
*Nature from the Sinfulness thereof*, which  
 I shall no longer insist upon here.

## S E C T. II.

*The Characters of Christ as our Deliverer  
 from the Guilt and Punishment of Sin.*

The other Branch of our Salvation is, that  
 which I chiefly have in View at present,  
 (*viz.*) that which consists in the *Delive-*  
*rance of our Persons from the Guilt of Sin,*  
*from Condemnation and Punishment*, and in  
 that *Right to Eternal Life* which is provided  
 and

and given us by our Lord *Jesus Christ*. ESSAY  
 There are many Representations thereof in VI.  
 Scripture, borrow'd from the Affairs of  
 Men; and the Characters which our blessed  
 Lord sustains, together with the Respects  
 that our *Faith* and our *Salvation* bear to  
 him, under these Characters, are chiefly  
 such as these.

I. The first and most general Character  
 which our Lord *Jesus Christ* assumes, is  
 that of a *Saviour*, by which Name he is  
 most frequently called in the New Testa-  
 ment. This is the very Signification of his  
 proper Name *Jesus*, in the *Hebrew*, Matt. i.  
 21. *Thou shalt call his Name Jesus, for he*  
*shall save his People from their Sins*. He  
 saves or delivers us from Sin, and from all  
 the painful or criminal Effects and Confe-  
 quences thereof: *He delivers us from the*  
*Wrath to come*, 1 *Theff. i. ult.* he saves us  
 by withholding the divine Anger from us,  
 and taking away every thing that provoked  
 it, or might provoke it.

*Salvation* is the natural Word to express  
 the Blessings we receive from *Christ*, as he  
 is our Saviour, *i. e.* Salvation from the Guilt  
 of Sin and Punishment thereof, partly in  
 this World, and chiefly in the World to  
 come.

*Faith*



## ESSAY

VI. *Faith*\* gives us a special Interest in these Blessings, by chusing him or *receiving him* as our Saviour, by *looking to him from the Ends of the Earth*, from the Borders of Hell, that *we may be saved*, Esa. xlv. by *calling upon the Name of the Lord*, that *we may be saved*, Rom. x. and by yielding Obedience to him; So *Faith* in a large Sense may be represented, for Heb. v. 9. *He is the Author of Eternal Salvation to them that obey him*, or accept of all the Blessings of Salvation in his own appointed way.

II. The next Title which is given to our Lord *Jesus*, on this Account, is a *Mediator*, to make Peace between an offended God and offending Man, 1 Tim. ii. 5. *There is one God and one Mediator between God and Man, even the Man Christ Jesus*. He is that *Days-Man* as *Job* speaks, Chap. ix. 33. that great *Reconciler*, that Umpire or Person who *can argue for us* with the blessed God, who is able to *lay his Hand upon both*, to come between God and Man, and to remove this dreadful difference betwixt them.

\* 'Tis granted that the Word *Faith in Christ*, in its most strict and proper Sense, signifies a *Trust in him*, according to the several Discoveries made of him in the Gospel: But if taken in its most large and general Sense, as it implies the Address or Application of a Sinner to *Jesus Christ* for Salvation, it includes in it those various Actions of the Soul which are Attendants on this *Trusting*, either with it, before it, or after it, as many Scriptures sufficiently manifest.

w  
And

And this he did by all those Methods which ESSAY  
God has appointed in the Covenant of Re- VI.  
demption made with his Son *Jesus Christ*,  
*i. e.* by his Incarnation, his Obedience, his  
Sufferings, his Death, his Intercession, &c.

Our *Salvation* under this Character is  
called *Peace*, Rom. v. 1. *Jesus Christ* him-  
self, for this Reason, is called *our Peace* or  
*Peace-maker*, Eph. ii. 24. and Esai. xxvii. 5.  
where a Sinner is represented as *taking hold*  
*of the Strength or Arm of the Lord*, in order  
*to make Peace with him*. It is called *Recon-*  
*ciliation to God*, 2 Cor. v. 18. and the Gos-  
pel is called the *Word of Reconciliation*:  
And let it be observed, that our *Mediator*  
not only takes away the Difference between  
God and Man, but has also proceeded so far  
as to obtain an Interest in the Love and Fa-  
vour of God forever, instead of his former  
Wrath, and Displeasure, and Condemna-  
tion.

*Faith* applies this Salvation to us, or se-  
cures to us an Interest therein, by our hum-  
ble Acceptance of *Jesus Christ* for such a  
*Mediator* as God has proposed him in his  
Word. Now this Acceptance of him as  
our Mediator, implies in it an earnest De-  
sire of *Reconciliation to God by him*, as St.  
*Paul* beseeches the *Corinthians* to be willing  
to be reconciled: It is an inward and hearty  
Approbation of what *Christ* has done, and  
what he does for our Reconciliation in his  
mediato-

ESSAY mediatorial Offices, attended with sincere

VI. Repentance for past Offences, and a Submission to God for Time to come, which is necessarily, and in the very Nature of Things required of all that would be reconciled to God, by the Mediation of *Christ*, \* and hereby we become Partakers of those Blessings of Pardon, Peace and Grace, which are procured by our great Mediator.

III. *Christ* is set forth as our *High-Priest* in the New Testament, as he was typified under that Character in the Old Testament; and especially in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. iv. viii. and ix. Now in fulfilling this Office, he offered a *Sacrifice acceptable to God* upon Earth, even a Sacrifice of Atonement, or *Propitiation by his own Blood*, and he ascended to Heaven to present it there before the Throne of God, *Heb.* viii. 3. and ix. 12, 22, 24. He went thither, *not without Blood, to appear for us in the Presence of God*, and to *intercede* for us in the Virtue of his Sacrifice, Chap. vii. 25. which, in the Language of Scripture, is represented as *carrying his Blood into Heaven, and as it were*

\* The personal Ministry of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, was *Repent and believe the Gospel*, Mark i. 15. The Message with which he sent his Apostles to the *Jews* was the same, Mark vi. 12. Luke ix. 6. and the Business of St. *Paul* among the *Gentiles*, was to *testify to them Repentance toward God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus*. Acts xx. 21.



were appearing with it there before the Throne of God: all which was shadowed out by the High-Priest carrying the Blood of the Sacrifice into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkling it there at the Mercy-Seat. ESSAY VI.

Our *Salvation* under this Character is called also *Peace*, *Pardon* or *Remission of Sins*, *Reconciliation* and *eternal Redemption*, and the *Promise of the eternal Inheritance*, Heb. ix. 12, 15.

*Faith* intitles us to the saving Benefits of the Priesthood of *Christ* by the *Acceptance of him*, as our high Priest and Intercessor, to make our Peace with God, by appearing before God for us in the Virtue of his Sacrifice, and making Intercession for us there. Or Faith may be represented as our *coming to God the Father by Jesus Christ*, as our high Priest, or applying to the Throne of Grace for Mercy under the Umbrage and Encouragement of *Jesus* our High-Priest, who is gone thither for us, Heb. iv. 14—16.

IV. Our Lord *Jesus Christ* is described not only as our *High-Priest*, but he himself was also the very *Sacrifice of Propitiation* or *Atonement*, to take away our Sins, Heb. ix. 12, 26. He offered himself up to God for us as a *Sacrifice*, Eph. v. 2. and his *Blood was shed for the Remission of our Sins*, as in the Words of the Institution of the Lord's Supper, recited by the several Evangelists, and by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 11. Esa. liii. 16.

God

ESSAY God the Father was pleased to *make his Soul*  
 VI. *an Offering for Sin.*

Our *Salvation* this way has the same Names as under the former Head, *viz.* the *washing away our Sins by his Blood*, Rev. i. 5. *The Forgiveness of Sin, Reconciliation to God, &c.*

Our *Faith* is called *Faith* or *Trust in his Blood as our Propitiation*, Rom. iii. 24. It is a Dependence on the Virtue and Efficacy of this Blood of *Christ*, for the procuring our Pardon : It is a sort of *Confession of our Sins over the Head of the Sacrifice* which was an ancient Ceremony in the Levitical *Law*, sometimes performed by the Offender, and sometimes by the Priest, whereby Sins were transferred to the Sacrifice who was to suffer for them, either by being slain, or by being sent into the Land of Separation and Destruction, Lev. i. 4. and iii. 13. and v. 6. and xvi. 21. It is as it were a putting our guilty Souls under the sprinkling of this Atoning Blood, that we may be cleansed from every Defilement ; and it doth, as it were, present to God the Father, that Blood on which our Hope is placed.

V. *Christ* is yet farther represented to us as an *Advocate*, which Idea is a very different thing from his Intercession as a *High-Priest*. 1 John ii. 2. *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.* The proper Design of  
 an

an *Higb-Priest* is to transact Affairs between God and Man, for Reconciliation and Divine Favour, &c. An *Advocate* is a Person appointed and chosen to plead before a Court of Justice against a Charge or Accusation, and by his Pleading to bring off his Client with Honour, or to defend one who is charged with a Crime, from the Condemnation and Death which might be due to it. So our Lord *Jesus Christ*, our Advocate, pleads against the Charges which the Law of God, or which *Satan*, our Adversary, may bring against us; not by pretending that we are not guilty, but by pleading the Atonement made by his Blood for our Sins, by pleading our Pardon in the Court of Heaven, and by pleading his own Righteousness, as the Foundation of our Hope; and therefore as the Apostle in this very Text calls him *Jesus Christ the Righteous*. in Rev. xii. 10, 11. *Satan* is represented as accusing the Saints Day and Night before God. *Jesus Christ* is their Advocate, representing his own Blood, and in this Sense they are said to cast down the Accuser by the Blood of the Lamb, which pleads and speaks better Things than the Blood of Abel. i. e. it pleads for Mercy, whereas the Blood of Abel pleaded for Vengeance.

Our *Salvation*, in this Sense, is called *Freedom from Guilt*, Absolution or Acquittment from the Penalty, and a Vindication of Christians



ESSAY *Christians* from the Charge of Sin, and the  
 VI. Condemnation thereof, which is obtained  
 by the prevailing Power and Interest which  
*Jesus Christ* our Advocate has at the Court  
 of Heaven, and by representing before the  
 Throne of God our Pardon purchased by  
 his Blood, so that *Satan* has no further  
 Charge against us.

By *Faith* we commit our Case and Circumstances to this great *Advocate*, and we become his *Clients*, Dependants upon him; and in this Sense *Faith* may be said to cast down our *Accuser* by the Blood of the Lamb, by trusting in this great and blessed Advocate, or resigning the important Concerns of our Souls to his Care and Faithfulness, to be transacted by him before the Bar of God in Heaven.

VI. Our Lord *Jesus Christ* is set forth as our *Sponsor* or *Surety*, Heb. vii. 22. *Jesus* was made a *Surety* of a better Testament, i. e. the new Covenant of Grace, as manifested in the Gospel. A *Surety* is properly one, who undertakes for another to do or suffer something for him, or who undertakes that this other Person shall do such Services, or suffer such Penalties; or enjoy such Privileges. So our Lord *Jesus Christ* has undertaken to answer the Demands of the Law of God for us who had broken it, to pay a Compensation for our Violations of the Law, and to make Peace betwixt God and us.

He has also undertaken, that all his People shall be sanctified and brought safely to the heavenly World. So Judah became a Surety to his Father Jacob for his Brother Benjamin, whom he took with him into Egypt. Gen. xlii. 9. *I will be Surety for him; of mine Hands shalt thou require him.* Reuben in the foregoing Chapter was in like manner a Sponsor for him, v. 37. *Deliver him into my Hands, and I will bring him to thee again:* and Joseph bound Simeon in Egypt as a Surety for the Return of his Brethren, and Benjamin with them, v. 19, 36.

Now as Christ was our Surety, so our Salvation may be called a Freedom from our Obligation to the Penal Law of God, which our Lord Jesus took upon himself to answer, Rom. vii. 6. *We are deliver'd from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held:* Gal. iii. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us, or freed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* Nor is this Obligation of Christ as a Sponsor, quite fulfilled till he has brought us all to Heaven, and can say to his Father, Lord, *here am I, and the Children which thou hast given me,* as Heb. ii. 13. and shall present us before the Throne without Spot or Blemish, Jude 24, &c. and Ephes. v. 25, 26, 27.

Now Faith gives us an Interest in all that Jesus Christ has done as our Sponsor by trusting ourselves with him intirely under that

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Character,

ESSAY Character, and accepting him as the *Surety*  
 VI. of this everlasting Covenant.

~~~~~ VII. *Christ* is exhibited in Scripture as the *second Adam*, as a *common Head* of his People, as a *publick Person*, and their *Representative*. This has some Difference in it from the former Character, tho' in many respects they agree and coincide. *Adam* was the Head of all his Offspring, a *common Person* and *Representative* for them, but not so properly their *Surety* in every Sense. *Christ* is what *Adam* was, *Rom. v. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 47.* *Christ* is not a common Person or Representative in his *Intercession* or his *Advocateship*, tho' he is properly a *Surety* therein, for he has undertaken as a *Surety* for us, to Plead in the Court of Heaven, and to bring us off with Safety and Honour: But in his *Obedience*, in his *Death*, and his *Appearance* for us in Heaven, he is our *common Head* and *Representative*.

Our *Salvation* in this Sense, may be called the *Glory of God*. *Rom. v. 2. We rejoice in hope of the Glory of God:* And it may be called *Eternal Life*. Both these describe the Happiness which was promised to Man upon his perfect Obedience to the Law at first. *Rom. ii. 10. and iii. 23.* By Sin we are fallen short of the *Glory of God*; but we obtain by *Jesus Christ Salvation with eternal Glory*. In this Sense *Christ* is our *Forerunner into Heaven*, and he, as our public Representative, appears



appears there for us, and has taken up Places ESSAY  
or Mansions in our Name, *Heb. vi. last. VI.*  
We shall *sit on his Throne. Rev. iii. 21.* 'Tis  
also called an *Inheritance*, and we are *Heirs*  
*of God and joint Heirs with Christ, Rom.*  
*viii. 17.* as we are one with him.

*Faith* accepts of *Christ* as our common  
*Head*, or great *Representative*, and gives us  
an Interest in this Salvation, by uniting us  
to *Christ*, and making us one with him.  
*Christ* is the Original Son of God, and we  
are also the *Sons of God by Faith in Christ*  
*Jesus, Gal. iii. 26.* and thus we are *Cokeirs*  
*with Christ*, he as the Head, and we as the  
Members; and *Faith* saves us as it has been  
called the *Bond of Union* between *Christ* and  
us. When we become Believers in *Christ*,  
whatever was done to *Christ* as a Head or a  
common Person, is then applied to us,  
either in the Right to it, or in the Posses-  
sion of it. *Christ* was justified from Sin, *i. e.*  
from all imputed Sin, at his Resurrection,  
and when we become the Seed of *Christ* by  
Regeneration thro' *Faith*, we are justified  
in him, much in the same manner as we  
were condemned in *Adam*, *i. e.* as soon as  
we become the Sons of *Adam* by a natural  
Birth: As there is no new actual and par-  
ticular Sentence of Condemnation past up-  
on us at our Birth, but we fall under the ge-  
neral Condemnation, when we become the  
Sons of *Adam*; so there is no new Act of

ESSAY Justification passed by God upon the Creature at his Regeneration or Believing, but  
 VI. the Word of God, which is his Sentence, pronounces us justified at our Faith, or our New Birth; and our Condemnation is taken away as soon as we are in *Christ*. Rom. viii. 1. *There is no Condemnation now to them that are in Christ Jesus.*

VIII. Another Character which *Christ* sustains, is that of a *Redeemer*, and it is generally represented, both in the Scripture and by our Divines, as one who redeems us both *by Power* and *by Price*. Now the *Redemption* of us by his *powerful* Grace out of the Slavery of *Satan*, and our own Lusts, and our Rescue from the Temptations of this World, belong rather to the other Part of this Salvation, wherein his sanctifying Influences are necessary and requisite: But when *Christ* is considered as a *Redeemer by Price*, he frees us by the Price of his own Blood as a Ransom, chiefly from the Hands of the vindictive Justice of God, and from the Bonds of the Guilt of Sin and Condemnation, whereby we are held as Breakers of the Law of God. Yet our *Redemption* from the Slavery of Sin and *Satan* may be also attributed to the Blood of *Christ* which purchased sanctifying Grace for us. The Name of a Redeemer is very applicable to both Parts of our Salvation. So he gave his Life a Ransom *for many*. Matth. xx. 28. *He redeemed*

redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, by ESSAY  
being made a Curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. He VI.  
redeemed us also by his precious Blood as of a  
Lamb without Blemish or Spot from our vain  
Conversation or Slavery to Sin, 1 Pet. i. 18,  
19. and Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain,  
and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood,  
Rev. v. 9.

Salvation in this Respect is called Re-  
demption, Rom. iii. 24. *Eternal Redemption*,  
Heb. ix. 12. and we are said to be *bought*  
*with a Price*, 1 Cor. vi. 20, and therefore we  
are the Lord's and not our own.

Faith applies this Benefit to us by our ac-  
cepting the Lord *Jesus Christ* under this  
Character as a Redeemer of our Persons from  
this Condemnation, or as our great Friend  
who ransom'd our Souls from Imprisonment  
under the Bonds of the condemning Law  
and Justice of God, who purchased and  
ransomed us from our Captivity, Bonds and  
Miseries in every Sense.

IX. To sum up all other Characters, I  
add in the last Place, *Christ* is represented as  
our great *Friend* and *Benefactor*, one who  
came down from Heaven to seek and to  
save lost Sinners here on Earth : He made a  
visit to our World to take special Notice of  
all our Wants, in order to relieve them all,  
and to do, and to procure for us whatsoever  
we stood in need of, in order to our Eter-  
nal Happiness. Under this Character he



ESSAY first instructed or taught us the Doctrine of

VI. our lost Estate, and acquainted us with the  
 ~~~~~ Methods of his Salvation; he procured or  
 purchased for us, by his Death, not only  
 pardon of Sin and future Blessedness, but  
 every Grace and every Blessing which was  
 necessary, in order to our full Possession of  
 Heaven, and no *greater Friendship* can any  
 Man shew to another, than to *lay down his*  
*Life for him*, John xv. 13.

Under this View *Salvation* or *Eternal*  
*Life* is called the *Gift of God by Christ Jesus*,  
 Rom. vi. 23. *Abundance of Grace and the*  
*Gift of Righteousness* in order to reign in  
*Life*, Rom. v. 17. He bought again for us  
 our forfeited Inheritance in Heaven.

Observe this Notion of *Christ* as a *Bene-*  
*factor* respects his doing every Kindness,  
 and procuring or purchasing every *Blessing*  
 for us, and bestowing it upon us; where-  
 as in the Character of a *Redeemer* he bought  
 or purchased our *Persons* from Imprisonment  
 and Condemnation.

*Faith* gives us an Interest in these Blessings  
 of *Christ* as a *Benefactor*, when it comes to  
 him, and seeks them at his Hand, when  
 it humbly depends upon *Christ* for them,  
 and trusts in him to bestow them. Thus  
 our *Faith* is like a Hand, whereby we re-  
 ceive these Blessings which *Christ* has to be-  
 stow, or like the Feet whereby we *come* or  
*fly* to *Christ* to partake of them; or it may  
 be

be liken'd to the *Voice of Petition*, where-  
by we seek them at his Hands, and call  
*upon the Lord* to bestow them. VI.

Thus I have briefly run thro' many of the Scriptural Characters or Offices, whereby our Lord *Jesus Christ* is represented to us, whereby our *Salvation* is set forth, and whereby our *Faith* is described as the appointed Means of our Interest in them. 'Tis evident enough they often run into one another, nor did the Gospel ever design that these several Representations of *Christ*, of his *Salvation* and of our *Faith*, should be kept so separate by exact *logical* Forms of Expression, as to please Scholastic Readers only; but that plain sincere Souls under a Sense of Guilt and Condemnation, might see and view them on every Side, and might find something in *Christ*, suited to their Sensation of their own Wants and Miseries, and apply themselves to him for Relief; but this shall be the Subject of the next *Section*.

### S E C T. III.

*The Reasons why Christ and his Salvation may be represented to us under these various Characters.*

The Great God was pleased to send his own Son *Jesus Christ* to save us by these various Characters or Offices, and to represent

ESSAY him to us under so many Relations, Em-  
 VI. blems or Figures borrowed from the Things  
 of Men, perhaps for such Reasons as  
 these.

*Reason 1.* That those Attributes of the Divine Nature, *viz.* his Wisdom, his Power, his Justice, his Mercy, his Faithfulness, &c. which could not have so full an Illustration one way, or under one Expression or Metaphor, might have another. God is said to be *just* and *kind*, and *faithful* in the Forgiveness of our Sins through the Blood of *Christ*. He is *just* in bestowing this Blessing upon us, since *Christ* has become our Sacrifice of Atonement, and made full Satisfaction for our Offences: He is *kind* or *merciful* in appointing such a Forgiveness for us, and sending his own Son to purchase or procure it: He is *faithful* in fulfilling his Promise made to *Jesus Christ*, in the Covenant of Redemption, and bestowing upon us what *Christ* our Benefactor has purchased for us. His Wisdom also and his Goodness are render'd more conspicuous to us in contriving and effecting our Salvation, in assuring it to us, and bestowing it upon us in so many different ways and manners.

*Reason 2.* That our Lord *Jesus Christ* might be the better known by us, and the more endeared to us, by sustaining these various Offices and Relations; and that we  
 might



might be able to borrow some further Ideas, ESSAY  
and some clearer Knowledge of these divine VI.  
and important things of our Salvation, from  
many of the common Affairs and Occur-  
rences of Life. When the blessed God has  
taken so much care to provide such a Sa-  
viour for us, and such an illustrious Salva-  
tion, he is very desirous that we should  
view it on all Sides, and be more thoroughly  
acquainted with it, as well as with that blef-  
sed Person by whom he prepares and be-  
stows it.

*Reason 3.* That all sorts of Persons, of  
whatsoever Temper or Capacity, whatso-  
ever Want or Difficulty, they are in, might  
have wherewith to suit them and their Cir-  
cumstances; that every Son and Daughter of  
*Adam*, in their various Ranks of Life, might  
all learn the way to receive this Saviour, and  
lay hold on this Salvation of *Christ*, and that  
he might render it easy and familiar to us by  
so many common Similitudes, or Parallels  
drawn from the things of common Life:  
And thus those who know not how to ap-  
ply themselves to *Christ* one way, might  
do it another.

As for Instance, some poor feeble Crea-  
tures who are convinced of Sin, and ready  
to perish, perhaps may not know how to ap-  
ply or address themselves to *Christ*, as a *Sure-  
ty* or as a *Sacrifice*, or as a *Redeemer*, &c. for  
these things are done already, and in a great  
measure

ESSAY measure were finished long ago; but the  
 VI. meanest and poorest Creatures can easily  
 ~~~~~ learn how to apply to *Christ* as a *Mediator*,  
 to do something for them that is yet to be  
 done, to reconcile them to God, and to  
 bring them into his Presence with Comfort;  
 or as an *High-Priest of Intercession*, or as an  
*Advocate* to plead for them before the  
 Throne of God, and their Faith can wait  
 on *Christ*, can call upon him, and trust  
 in him to make *Intercession* for them in the  
 Virtue of his Blood, or to present his Blood  
 before the Father as an Atonement for their  
 Sins, to appear before God for them as  
 their great Friend in Heaven, to become  
 their *Mediator*, *Peace-maker* or *Reconciler*,  
 to bring them into the Favour of God.

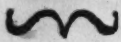
Those who are Infants, or Babes in  
*Christ*, may thus be nourished by the *sincere*  
*Milk of the Word*, and with Diet fitted for  
 their feeble Capacity, when they are not  
 sufficiently grown to bear stronger Meat, as  
 the Apostle expresses himself, Heb. v. 12,  
 —14. whereas those who are well grown  
 Christians, and, in the Sense of the Apostle,  
 may be called *perfect*, may know better  
 how to converse with *Christ* as their great  
*Representative*, they may know and rejoice  
 in him, and in the Power of his *Resurrec-*  
*tion*, and the Fellowship of his Suffering, and  
 be made conformable unto his Death; but  
 those that are in a lower Form may not  
 have

have their Apprehensions so well cleared, ESSAY  
and so much raised at present, although VI.  
afterwards God *may reveal also these things*  
*unto them, Phil. iii. 10, 15.*

*Reason 4. Christ* is set forth under these various Characters, that as our Understanding in the Things of Religion, and in the Graces and Glories of *Christ* increases, we might take the faster hold of *Christ*, if I might so express it, and that we might have more various Exercises of our Faith, and more numerous Evidences of the Truth of our Faith, and secure to ourselves more solid ground of Hope, when we can view him in all these Relations, and our *Faith* can receive or lay hold of him under all these Forms. Thus we may hereby obtain double and treble Confirmation of our Faith and Comfort, *Heb. vi. 17, 18.* God gives us both his *Promise* and his *Oath*, to secure Salvation to us; he *swears*, in order to confirm what he had *promised*, *that by several immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong Consolation, who have fled to lay hold of the Hope set before us.*

Thus has God been pleased also to do in the various Representations he has made of *Christ Jesus* our Saviour, that our Meditations and Prayers, our Hopes and Dependencies, and indeed all the pious Exercises of our Souls towards *Christ*, might have



ESSAY a rich Variety for our Entertainment, Support and Joy; and therefore the Apostles  
 VI.  have written these things unto the Disciples of *Christ*, that their Joy might be full.  
 I John i. 4.

I add 5thly, another Reason is, that God our Father and *Jesus Christ* our Saviour might have the larger Revenues of Glory from us, and receive Honour from our Hands in a rich Variety; that we might have our Thank-Offerings rising up to God and the Lamb, in many Forms of Adoration and Expression; that we might bless our dear Redeemer, rejoice in him, and do Honour to his Name under all those happy Representations of his Grace and Glory, in which he has set himself before us in the Gospel.

The last Reason I will add, shall be this: That in all Ages the Followers of *Christ* might have a more clear and easy Relief, from those Difficulties and Controversies which may attend these great Doctrines of our Salvation, and which might darken and perplex the Way whereby God has appointed us to be made Partakers of this Blessing.

#### S E C T. IV.

*The Difficulties which are relieved by this various Representation of the Salvation of Christ.*

Since God has set forth our blessed Saviour with his *Salvation*, and our Faith which interests

interests us therein, under so many various ESSAY Characters and Expressions, the following VI. Difficulties will be very much relieved hereby, and several Controversies abolished.

1. A Christian who reads these things in his Bible, cannot say that *Christ* has saved us in this particular manner, and therefore he did not save us in the other; as for Instance,

When we read or assert that *Christ was put to Death* for us, as a *Sacrifice for our Sins*, we cannot say, therefore *he did not save us as a High-Priest*: Or when we read or assert that he saved us *as our High-Priest*, we cannot say, therefore *he was not a Sacrifice*; for the Scriptures assure us, *Christ himself is both the High-Priest and the Sacrifice also*, Eph. v. 2. *Christ hath given himself for us as an Offering and Sacrifice to God.*

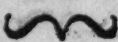
Again, One Christian will perhaps be ready to maintain, that *Christ* saves us as a great *Friend* and *Benefactor*, who has, by the Price of his Blood, purchased the *Blessings* of Grace and Glory for us, and bestows them upon us; another may chuse to fix his Eye more upon *Christ* as a *Redeemer*, and say he has bought or purchased our *Persons* from the Hands of divine Justice, or he has redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, and from the Bonds wherein we, as Criminals, were held by the Law of God;

But

ESSAY But neither of them should dare to say, *he*  
 VI. *bought or purchased these Blessings* for us, and  
 therefore *he did not purchase our Persons*;  
 for he has done both these under different  
 Characters.

Yet further, one Christian may delight  
 more to fix his Eye and Hope on *Christ*,  
 as a *Surety* or *Representative* of his Elect,  
 or of those whom he certainly and finally  
 saves, and on that account he suffered Death  
 particularly *in their room and stead*, and se-  
 cured to them certain Deliverance and Sal-  
 vation; yet he cannot therefore affirm, that  
*Christ* did not, in any Sense, die for all  
 Men, as a general Friend of Man, or suffer  
 Death *for their Good*; nor can he say, that the  
 Benefits of his Death do not any way reach to  
 all Mankind. Another perhaps will say, *since*  
*all are dead, he died for all* as a common *Medi-*  
*ator* betwixt God and Man, or as a *general*  
*Benefactor* to procure *conditional* Salvation  
 for all Men, and offer it to them if they  
 are willing to come to him and receive it;  
 but he cannot say, that he was not a *proper*  
*Surety*, or *Representative* of his Elect,  
 whereby he has *secured certain* Salvation to  
 them only: For as I have shewn in former  
 Papers, that he by his Righteousness and  
 Death has directly and *absolutely* procured  
 this Salvation for his Elect, as their *Head*  
 and *Representative*, but yet he has also pro-  
 cured Salvation, with all the Glories of it,  
*conditionally,*



conditionally, for the rest of Mankind, upon **ESSAY**  
which Foundation these Blessings are offer'd **VI.**  
to all Men in the Gospel. 

2. There is another sort of Difficulty  
from which these various Representations  
of the Salvation of *Christ* may deliver and  
relieve us, (*viz.*) The Actions or the Suf-  
ferings of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, have not  
precisely the same Relation, Character or  
Effect, with regard to one of his Offices,  
as they have with regard to another; and  
therefore what is pronounced safely, with  
regard to the *Death of Christ* under one  
Character, cannot be with Safety pronounced  
concerning it under another. As for Ex-  
ample,

When so glorious and illustrious a Per-  
son as *Jesus Christ* appears as our *Friend*  
and *Benefactor*, he paid so sublime a Price  
by his Death and Sufferings, as in a strict  
Sense to satisfy or make full Recompence  
for all our Violations of the Law of God,  
and to merit Pardon and Eternal Life at the  
Hand of God for us: But when we con-  
sider him merely as our *Representative*, or  
our *Surety*, and to answer what the Law  
demanded of us, he cannot be so properly  
said to merit our Pardon, or to make full  
and abundant Recompence to the Justice  
of God for our Offences; for this might  
lead or incourage Persons to infer, that we  
ourselves have satisfied God, or made Re-  
compence

ESSAY compence to him in the Person of *Christ*,  
 VI. or that we have merited our Pardon and  
 our Salvation, because what he did intirely  
 as our *Representative*, we may in some sort  
 be esteemed to have done in and by him.

Again, the Death of *Christ* as a *Surety*  
 and the *second Adam* was his suffering of the  
 Curse of the Law, and the Penalty thereof  
 in our stead, which we had incurred; and  
 in this View his Death and his Dereliction,  
 or being forsaken of the Father, was the  
*Idem*, or Same, which Sinners should have  
 suffer'd; tho' in other Respects, and when  
 we consider him as a glorious *Mediator*, or  
 super-eminent *Benefactor*, then he appears  
 with all the Dignity of his indwelling God-  
 head, and in this Sense he paid a Price of  
 superior Value, his Death is the *Tantundem*;  
 and more, he makes an abundant Com-  
 pensation for Sin, and a Satisfaction to the  
 Demands of the Law, and honours the Ju-  
 stice of God more than our everlasting Pu-  
 nishment could do, and hereby he merits  
 for us those Blessings which are above all our  
 Reach, or Pretences, or Obligations to pro-  
 cure or merit for ourselves.

Again, as he was a *Redeemer*, his Death  
 is a *Price paid for our Souls* to Divine Ju-  
 stice, in order to release us from the Bonds  
 of Condemnation: But his Death as a *Be-  
 nefactor*, may be rather consider'd as a *Price  
 for the Blessings* which he purchased for us,  
 and

and of which we are made Partakers thro' him. ESSAY VI.

3. There are other Difficulties which are started among the several Controversies of Christians with regard to our *Faith*, and the way and manner whereby this *Faith* interests us in *Christ* and his Salvation: And since *Christ* has sustained so many Characters and Offices, and stands in so many Relations to us, our *Faith* is exercised towards him in a Correspondency to each of these Relations and Characters; and therefore when we read or assert that our *Faith* saves us in this way, or under this *Logical* Relation, we dare not therefore assert, that it cannot save us in any other way, or under another *Logical* Relation. I would endeavour to make this thing a little more clear, because there have many Controversies arisen upon this Head.

Let us then briefly recollect or take a short Survey of the several Representations which are given us of *Faith in Christ*, according to these different Characters of our blessed Saviour.

*Faith* in its most general Sense, Nature and Design, as it refers to *Jesus Christ*, is the Application or Address of the Soul to *Christ*, or to God by him, under any or all these Characters, whereby he and his Salvation are set forth in Scripture. Now these Characters being so very different and various, require different manners of Address to him, which



ESSAY which are represented in Scripture, which perhaps may be all included in *Faith* taken in its largest Sense, together with those necessary Acts of the Soul which must accompany, attend, or follow it.

Particularly then *Faith* is sometimes represented by believing his Gospel, Mark i. 15. *Repent and believe the Gospel*: But here it is to be supposed, that all the proper and sanctifying Effects of this Faith must attend it, and it must not rest in a mere Assent.

'Tis a Knowledge of *Christ*, John xvii. 3. *This is Life Eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*. Isai. liii. 11. *By his Knowledge, or the Knowledge of him, shall he justify many*: And here I might add, that this our Knowledge requires a correspondent Practice, otherwise it will be of no more avail towards Salvation, than the Knowledge of *Devils, who believe and tremble*.

'Tis a Believing in *Christ*, which perhaps ought rather to be render'd *Trusting in Christ*. Isai. ii. 10. compar'd with Rom. xv. 12. *In him shall the Gentiles trust*, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, or trusted*, Eph. i. 12, 13. *who first trusted in Christ, or hoped in him, as in the Original*.

Believing in his Name, John i. 12. *To them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed on his Name*.

Seeking to him, Isai. xi. 10. *To him shall the Gentiles seek*.

Receiving

Receiving Christ, John i. 12. *To as many as received him, &c.* Coloss. ii. 6. *As you have received Christ, so walk in him.* VI.

Laying hold of Christ, Isai. xxvii. 5. *Let him take hold of my Strength that he may make Peace with me.* Heb. vi. 18. *Those who have fled for Refuge to lay hold of the Hope set before them.*

Hearing of Christ or hearkening to him, Luke ix. 35. *This is my beloved Son, hear ye him, or hearken unto him.*

Calling upon Christ, Rom. x. 12, 13. *Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Coming unto Christ, Matt. xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that Labour, &c.* John v. 40. *Ye will not come unto me that ye may have Life.*

Flying to him for Refuge, Heb. vi. 18. as before.

Looking unto Christ, or beholding him, Isai. xlv. 25. *Look unto me all ye Ends of the Earth and be saved.* Isai. lxv. 1. *I said, behold me, behold me, to a Nation not called by my Name.*

Obeying Christ, Heb. v. 9. *He became the Author of Eternal Salvation to them that obey him.*

Believing in God through Christ, 1 Pet. i. 21. *Who by him do believe in God.*

Coming to God by Christ, John xiv. 6. *No Man cometh to the Father but by me.*

S 2

Thus

ESSAY Thus you see *Faith*, together with its various Concomitants, or consequent Exercises of Soul, is represented as our Address or Application to *Christ* for Salvation by and with almost all the Senses or Powers of Nature: 'Tis looking to him with the *Eye*, 'tis hearkening to him with the *Ear*, 'tis receiving or laying hold of him with the *Hand*, 'tis coming to him with the *Feet*, 'tis Knowledge of him in the *Head*, trust in him with the *Heart*, calling upon him with the *Tongue*, and obeying him with all the *Powers of Soul and Body*.

Now 'tis well known, that there have been great Disputes about the particular Influence which this *Act of Faith* has, in order to interest us in the Salvation of *Christ*: And here I will readily grant, that the Word *Faith* primarily and chiefly implies such a Knowledge of *Christ*, such a Belief of his Gospel, such a Sense of our Wants, and his Sufficiency to supply them, as leads the Soul to receive him under any of those Characters in which the Gospel sets him forth, and more particularly to *trust in him* for this Salvation \*: But there are many poor

\* It may be observed here, that almost every Character or Action, whereby *Faith in Christ* is represented in Scripture, carries in it the Notion of *Trust*, *Hope* or *Dependance*, so that the original and most proper Sense of the Word *Faith* is still maintained, and every Sinner who sincerely applies himself to *Christ* for Salvation, does certainly put forth an Act of *Trust* or *Hope* in him, though



poor Souls who have learnt sincerely to address themselves to our Lord *Jesus Christ*, by one or two of these Characters and Representations of *Faith*, but were never carried on so far as explicitly to make an Address to *Christ* under all his distinct Relations, or to perform every one of these Actions in their Addresses to *Christ*: And can I suppose where the Soul is very sincere in its Desires of the whole Salvation of *Christ*, both in the Holiness and the Happiness of it, and seeks it from him, that such Souls shall be excluded, because they have not well learnt all the Metaphors and Figures under which these sacred Things are exhibited in the Gospel?

Again, on the other hand, if one should say, *Faith* saves us as it is an *Eye* to look to *Christ* that we may be saved, he cannot thence infer it does not save us as an *Ear* to hearken to him, as an *Hand* to lay hold of him, or as a *Tongue* to call upon him, or a *Heart* to trust in him.

Again, if another should say, *Faith* saves us as an *Instrument* \* to receive *Christ*, and

S 3

his

though he may not always so evidently and distinctly apprehend and judge of the inward Acts of his own Soul, or distinguish them so exactly.

\* Perhaps there have been no greater Quarrels upon this Subject than amongst those who have maintain'd that *Faith* saves us as it is an *Instrument*, whereby we receive

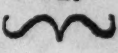
ESSAY his Righteousness and Grace, he cannot

VI. argue that it does not save us, as it is a *Condition*, or a *Term* of our being accepted of God thro' him; or if another should say, *Faith* saves us, as it is a *laying hold* of his Person, or as a *Bond of Union* between *Christ* and us, yet he cannot argue, therefore *Faith* does not save us, as it is a *Looking* or *Seeking to him* from afar off, or as it is a *Calling upon* the Name of the Lord.

God has been pleased in many Ways to manifest these most important Things of our Salvation, and revealed them to us in a variety of human Expressions, Similitudes, Actions and Relations, that the poorest and the weakest *Christian* might have Support and Encouragement for his Hope.

*Conclusion*: 'Tis confessed, that these Thoughts are not sufficiently digested into perfect Form, nor put together with all that Accuracy as Theological Controversies require; but my Sense and Meaning in them is

receive *Christ* and his Righteousness, and those who assert it is a *Condition* upon which *Christ* has appointed us to be interested in his Blessings: And tho' I think they may both be true, according to the Representation I have made in this and other of these *Essays*; yet we have no great Reason to be fond of either of these Terms, especially when they are made a Matter of Controversy, because they are neither of them the Expressions of Scripture, which is our supreme Rule of Instruction in the Matters of our Salvation.

is pretty obvious and evident: Perhaps this Essay  
 Design might be more improved and pro- VI.  
 moted much farther by a wiser Head, and   
 a better Pen; and it might assist the Solu-  
 tion of many Difficulties, and relieve the  
 Quarrels and Contentions of different Par-  
 ties to a greater degree; for 'tis evident,  
 that the Characters which our Blessed Lord  
 sustains, and the Exercises of our Faith on  
 him are very various, and we are made Par-  
 takers of this Salvation, perhaps as many  
 ways as our *Acts of Faith* bear different Re-  
 spects to the several blessed *Characters and*  
*Offices* which *Christ* sustains, in order to our  
 Salvation. Now, to him who has re-  
 deemed us by Power and by Price; to him  
 who has saved us by his Blood and his Spi-  
 rit; to him who has purchased our Souls  
 from the Bondage of the Law, and from  
 Death and Hell, and has purchased for us  
 the Blessings of Grace, the Pardon of our  
 Sins, and an Inheritance in Heaven, be  
 Glory and Honour in endless Varieties,  
 and eternal Praises from all the Redeem-  
 ed. *Amen.*



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## ESSAY VII.

*Against UNCHARITABLENESS.*

*Wherein the secret Springs of that Vice are traced, and the Mischievous Effects of it briefly survey'd.*

Written to expose that most Unchristian Iniquity of *Censures, Revilings and Church-Anathemas*, on the Account of smaller Disputables in Christianity.

ROM. xiv. 3.

*Let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth, for God hath received him.*

LUKE ix, 54, 55.

*His Disciples said, Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven and consume them? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of.*

— Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ?  
Tantum Relligio potuit suadere malorum?

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## INTRODUCTION.

**C**HARITY in the Soul of Man is the very Picture of the God-head, taken as it stands in the fairest Light, Wisdom and Holiness, Power, Sovereignty and Justice

stice are various Features of the Deity: They are indeed his very Nature and Essence; yet the Scripture rather chuses to express, that *God is Love*, and that twice in one Chapter, 1 *John* iv. 8, and 16. The beloved Disciple that lean'd on the Bosom of *Jesus*, took peculiar Delight in the Contemplation of God, under this Character. This appears in his Gospel as well as in his Epistle. The other Glories of that infinite Beauty shine with awful Beams, and command my Reverence: But methinks, I love to look upon so glorious a Being in his most condescending Air, and to converse with him in his mildest and most inviting Aspect.

Charity in Man is a Grace of that alluring Sweetness, that my Pen would fain be attempting to say something in Favour of it: I find a strange Pleasure in discoursing of this Virtue, hoping that my very Soul may be moulded into its Divine Likeness: I would always feel it inwardly warming my Heart. I would have it look thro' my Eyes continually, and it should be ever ready upon my Lips to soften every Expression of my Tongue. I would dress myself in it as my best Raiment. I would put it on upon my Faith and Hope, not so as entirely to hide them, but as an upper and more visible Vesture, constantly to appear in among Men. For our *Christian Charity*, is to evidence our other Virtues.

Un-

ESSAY VII. Uncharitableness is a loathsome Part of the Image of the fallen Angel: It is akin to the Hatred of God. *For he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?* 1 John iv. 20. He that hates his Fellow-Christian, and brings railing Accusations against him for a Difference in little Opinions, how can he expect to be beloved of God, who beholds in the best of us so many monstrous Follies, and Guilt of a more aggravated Nature? By the Word *Uncharitableness* here, I would not include our Neglect of Charity to the Poor and Hungry, nor our Aversion to Errors of the grosser kind, but I mean our Aversion to such Persons who not only profess to be *Christians*, but who also agree with us in the chief Doctrines of *Christianity*, (*viz.*) the Pardon of our Sins by the atoning Sacrifice of *Christ*, and the Sanctification of Men by the powerful Operations of the *Holy Spirit*, and the Necessity of Faith in *Christ*, and Good Works, &c. I mean our Aversion to those who differ from us in little Punctilios of Doctrine or Duty which are not expressly and plainly written in the New Testament; those who maintain such an Aversion to their fellow Christians, as to pronounce Damnation upon them, or some terrible and unchristian Censures, because they do not come up to our Sentiments and Practices in things which are  
of



of little Moment, while we agree in all fundamental Points, and such as are of most Importance. ESSAY VII.

This *Uncharitableness* is a Vice attended with such a Train of Mischiefs, that I would set all my biggest Powers in Array to fight against it. 'Tis a Fountain of such bitter Waters, that I would fain dam up the Spring. 'Tis a Plant of so poisonous a Product, that I would dig deep and search for the Roots, and tear up all the Fibres of it, tho' they twined about my Heart-strings.

### S E C T. I.

#### *The Causes of Uncharitableness.*

An Uncharitable Humour springs generally from some of these following Causes.

I. *First, From a malicious Constitution of Nature, an acrimonious or a choleric Temper of Blood.* There are some Animal Engines of human Flesh, that have their Juices all sour'd in their very Formation; and there is an ill Ferment rais'd in such Persons at the Perception of every Object, that is not just suited to their present Fancy and Inclination: And by the hard Laws of Union between Soul and Body in this our fallen State, the Spirit too often complies with the fretful Distempers of the Flesh. There are but few that attempt to suppress the Ferment, and to resist the angry Motions of the Animal; and of those few that attempt it,

ESSAY it, scarce one in ten is very successful: For  
 VII. 'tis a Work of Toil, and Difficulty, perpetual Watchfulness and unceasing Prayer.

This ill Humour mixes itself with Religion, as well as with Civil Affairs. It diffuses it Malignity thro' all the Studies and the Manners of the Man, and gives a visible Tincture to his Notions and his Practices. *Furio* can never converse about the calmest and most speculative Points of Divinity, but his Indignation kindles against every different Opinion, his fiery Temper breaks out and blazes, and he bestows on his own Deportment the honourable Names of shining Light and burning Zeal. His peevish and angry Passions are so blended With his Understanding, that hard Names are his best Arguments; most convincing to himself, tho' they are the just Scorn of the wise. He stabs his Brethren that differ from him to the Heart, with pointed Rail- ing; and from an Aversion to an Opinion rises to an immortal Hatred of the Person. If our great Creator has united any of our Souls to Bodies that are less infected with this vicious Juice, we have Reason to adore his Sovereign Goodness.

II. *Self-Love and Pride, and a vain Conceit of our own Opinions*, is another Spring of uncharitable Carriages. Did you ever see a weak and humble Soul sensible of its own Poverty and Ignorance, and ready to esteem others

others above himself, easily indulge this un-  
charitable humour? Alas! poor foolish Man-  
kind is very prone to esteem itself Wise and  
Knowing. Little *Laudillus*, who is almost  
always in the wrong, has much ado to per-  
swade himself, that he was ever capable of  
mistaking. He secretly thinks all his Opi-  
nions to be divine Truths, and therefore he  
is very lavish in pronouncing Error and He-  
resy upon every Notion and Practice that  
differs from his own. He takes the Free-  
dom to chuse a Religion for himself, but he  
allows no Man besides the same Liberty. He  
is sure that he has Reason to dissent from  
others, but no Man has Reason to dissent  
from him. He sets up for Infallibility with-  
out a Triple Crown, and fixes a See of Ec-  
clesiastical Sovereignty on this Side the Water.  
He awes some slavish Spirits into Submission,  
and they become treacherous to their own  
Souls and to the Rights of Human Nature,  
by delivering up their Faith and Consciences  
to his imperious Dictates: Then the Man  
grows haughty, surly and severe, especially  
if he be advanced to any degree of Honour  
and Authority in the Church: Then in his  
inflexible Justice he delivers up the humble  
and inquisitive Christian unto *Satan*, because  
he can't *assent and consent to all and every thing*  
*contain'd* in his Scheme; and he teaches per-  
haps his elder Brethren the Doctrines and  
Discipline of the Gospel, as *Gideon* did the  
Elders

ESSAY  
VII.



ESSAY VII. Elders of *Succoth*, with the Briars and Thorns of the Wilderness.

III. This hateful Vice may be derived from a third Original; and that is a *constant and friendly Acquaintance with the Men and Books of our own Opinion*, and an *Avoidance of all the Writers and Persons that differ from us*: This has a mighty Influence to beget and maintain uncharitable Notions; yet this is the constant Practice, not only of the unlearned, but of too many of the learned World. *Hermes* sits all the Year in his own Cell, and never looks abroad beyond the Clan of his own Fraternity: *Hermes* reads the Controversies as they are described only by one Party, and disputes them over only in the Books that are written on one Side. He finds a great Appearance of Argument and Scripture there, and then proclaims it impossible that the adverse Party should shew equal Reason or Revelation: And thus he proceeds to censure them as *Men of corrupt Minds, reprobate concerning the Faith, and twisting the Scriptures to their own Damnation*. *Cicero* in his Treatise *De natura Deorum*, marks this Humour, and brands it, *Vestra solum legitis, vestra amatis, cæteros causa incognita condemnatis* \*.

But let you and I, my Friend, who delight in Charity, let us converse a little with  
Authors

\* You read only your own Books, you love only your own, and you condemn others before you know any sufficient Reason, for want of knowing their Opinions.

Authors that differ from our present Opinions, ESSAY and we shall see their Sentiments drest up so VII. plausibly, and set in so fair a Light, that might easily perswade Men of sincere Consciences to embrace them; and this will prevent us from censorious Thoughts concerning our candid Adversaries, and their Disciples. There is scarce any thing that enlarges the Mind more, and more disengages it from narrow and selfish Principles, than a free Converse with the Virtuous and Ingenious, of all Parties.

There is a memorable Story to this Purpose, concerning two Neighbours in an unfociable Town, who were always quarrelling about the private Meeting and the Parish-Church: Both Places of Worship in that Town were well supplied with Preachers of good Sense and serious Religion; but each of them was the Subject of unmerciful Reproach between these two Neighbours, whenever they met, and their different Methods of Worship were mutually reviled; the one as formal and spiritless, the other as enthusiastical and indecent: At last *Pacifico* their common Friend perswaded them to hear each others Minister, and accompanied them both one Day to their different Assemblies; and they were both surprized to hear the Gospel preached with a due Degree of Decency and Fervour, both at Meeting and at Church: And though they continued still

to

ESSAY to adhere to their own Party, as judging it,  
 VII. in some Respects, suited best to their Edifi-  
 cation; yet they maintained hearty Friend-  
 ship with each other, and delightful Society  
 in religious Conference: Thus the quarrellom  
 Mistake was rectify'd by better Acquaintance:  
 They lived many Years together in Peace;  
 they compos'd the Animosities of different  
 Parties, that dwelt in the Town; they died  
 in perfect Charity, and left a sweet Influence  
 behind them, and an honourable Example.

IV. A Fourth Spring of Uncharitableness  
 is, *our reading the Word of God with a whole  
 Set of Notions establisht before-hand*: And  
 yet how common a Method, and how con-  
 stant is this? *Diæcion* has long ago determi-  
 ned, that Bishops must be superior to Presby-  
 ters; he has received Ordination from Epis-  
 copal Hands; and hopes one Day himself to  
 be capable of ordaining others. Thus while  
 he is growing up towards the Mitre, he reads  
 the Scriptures only to confirm his own deter-  
 min'd Opinions. He stretches and torments  
 many an unwilling Text, to make it speak the  
 Language of his own Thoughts. He ne-  
 glects the Passages that favour all other  
 Forms of Government and Methods of Mi-  
 nistration; or else he constrains them to  
 mean Episcopacy too: Every Word that he  
 reads, hath a *Diocesan* Aspect; and the first  
 Verse of *Genesis* can prove Prelacy (for ought



I know) as it has been able heretofore to de-  
 monstrate *Papacy*, when *In principio creavit* VII.  
*Deus cælum & terram*, decided the Contro-  
 versy, and set the *Pope* above the *Emperor* :  
 For God made all things from one Beginning,  
 and not from two.

*Synodias* reads the Bible with a *Presbyte-  
 rian* Glas, and *Fratris* with a Congrega-  
 tional Optick : They can find nothing there  
 but their own Opinions, and both of them  
 wonder that *Diacion* should not see them  
 too. *Fratris* turns over the Scriptures with  
 great Diligence and Meditation, and as often  
 as he finds the Word *Church* there, he thinks  
 of nothing but a Congregation of faithful Men;  
 as the Church of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, and  
*Antioch* are so many single Congregations.  
 When *Synodias* meets the same Word in his  
 Bible, he is often in the midst of an Assem-  
 bly of Divines; and especially when any  
 Power is attributed to the Church, he is  
 sure it must intend a Classis of Presbyters,  
 or Consistory of Elders. When the same  
 Word falls under the Eye of *Diacion* in his  
 Course of reading the New Testament, he  
 cannot imagine any thing is meant short of  
 a Diocess: All his Churches are or should  
 be as big as Counties or Shires. And I might  
 add, that when poor *Parochianus* the Ma-  
 son finds Leisure to read a Chapter, and  
 lights upon the mention of a Church in it,  
 he thinks immediately of a tall Stone-Build-

T

ing

ESSAY ing with a Steeple upon it, a Bell or two,  
 VII. and a Weather-cock.

~ I might give the like Instances of many other Terms and Expressions in Scripture, to which Men have unalterably fixed their several different Ideas, and rais'd Consequences from them, and interpret the Word of God by them, without enquiring whether their Ideas are conformable to the Sense in which the Scripture uses those Expressions: And then 'tis no Wonder that their Schemes of Ecclesiastical Government are so different: And yet each of these prepossessed Opiniators think their own Exposition of the Text so evident, that they chide the Perverseness of all other Men, as though they were resolved to wink against the Light. 'Tis like a Person of a fretful Constitution, whose Eyes are also tinged with the *Jaundice*, he quarrels with every Man that he meets, because he will not consent to call all things yellow. Thus by the false Light of Affection in which they behold some beloved Texts, and their Negligence of all others, or at least by the Colours of Prejudice that they throw upon them, each triumphs in his own Sentiments, and pronounces the Apostles and Prophets of his Side. Then he lets fly many a sharp Invective against all the Men that presume to oppose him; for in his Sense they oppose the

the Apostles themselves, and fight against  
the Authority of God.

ESSAY  
VII.

But when a Man takes a Bible into his Hand without a pre-conceived Scheme in his Head, and though he may make use of Systems to secure himself from Inconsistencies, yet he puts them not in the Place of the Holy Scriptures, but resolves to form his Body of Divinity by the New Testament, and derive all his Opinions and Practices thence; he will then find so many Expressions that seem to favour the several contending Parties of Christians, that in some Points he will perhaps be tempted to doubt of all Opinions, and sometimes have much ado to secure himself from the Danger of Eternal Scepticism: When in any doubtful Point his Judgment is led to a Determination, 'tis always with great Caution, and by slow Degrees: He is not carried by Violence to any Dogmatical Conclusion; he is modest in his Assertions, and gentle towards all whose Judgment and Conscience have determined them another Way, because he met with so many probable Arguments on their Side, in the Time of his Dubitation and Inquiry, that had almost fix'd his Opinion the same Way too.

If I may be permitted to speak of myself, I might acquaint the World with my own Experience. After some Years spent in the Perusal of Controversial Authors,



ESSAY and finding them insufficient to settle my  
VII. Judgment and Conscience in some great  
Points of Religion, I resolved to seek a Determination of my Thoughts from the Epistles of St. *Paul*, and especially in that weighty Doctrine of Justification: I perused his Letter to the *Romans* in the Original, with the most fixed Meditation, laborious Study, and importunate Requests to God, for several Months together: First without consulting any Commentator, and afterwards called in the Assistance of the best Criticks and Interpreters. I very narrowly observed the daily Motions of my own Mind: I found it very hard to root out old Prejudices, and to escape the Danger of new ones: I met with some Expressions of the Apostle that sway'd me towards one Opinion, and others that inclin'd the Balance of my Thoughts another way; and 'twas no easy Matter to maintain my Judgment in an equal Poise, 'till some just and weighty Argument gave the Determination; so many crossing Notions, perplexing Difficulties and seeming Repugnances lay in my Way, that I most heartily bless the divine Goodness that enabled me at last to surmount them all, and established my Judgment and Conscience in that glorious and forsaken Doctrine of the Justification of a Sinner in the Sight of God, by the Imputation of a perfect Righteousness which is not originally his own.  
From

From my own Experiment I can easily ESSAY  
 guess what confounding Intricacies of VII.  
 Thought others pass through in their ho-  
 nest Searches after Truth. These Conflicts  
 did exceedingly enlarge my Soul, and  
 stretch'd my Charity to a vast Extent. I  
 see, I feel, and am assured that several Men  
 may be very sincere, and yet entertain No-  
 tions in Divinity, all widely different. I  
 confess now and then some Opinions, or  
 some unhappy Occurrences are ready to nar-  
 row and confine my Affections again, if I  
 am not watchful over myself; but I pray  
 God to preserve upon my Heart a strong  
 and lasting Remembrance of those Days and  
 those Studies, whereby he laid within me  
 the Foundation of so broad a Charity.

V. *Fifthly.* Another Cause of Unchari-  
 tableness is a *Want of Reflection on the Grounds*  
*of our own Opinions.* We should be more  
 just to ourselves, and more gentle to others,  
 if we did but impartially review the Rea-  
 sons why we first embraced our several Prin-  
 ciples and Practices.

Perhaps 'twas Education determined most  
 of them, then let us chide ourselves severely  
 for building upon so careless and slight a  
 Bottom: Or let us be civil to the greatest  
 part of Mankind, who came by all their  
 Principles the same Way. Perhaps we were  
 led into particular Notions by the Authority

ESSAY of Persons whom we reverence or love; then

VII. we should not upbraid our Neighbours that have been influenced into different Sentiments by the same Springs. Perhaps we have felt Interest sometimes ready to byass our Thoughts, and give us a secret Inclination or Aversion to a Party; let us then pity the Frailty of Human Nature, and have Compassion upon Men whose Judgments are exposed to so mean a Bribery, and sometimes have been warped aside from the Truth. Or finally, perhaps it was deep Meditation, a daily Search into Scripture, and fervent Prayer were the Methods by which we pursued Knowledge, and established our Principles upon solid Reason. Let us then be so charitable to those whom we contend with, as to suppose they sought after Truth the same Way, and then our Contentions will have less Fire and Spleen in them, less of Clamour and Indignation against those that differ from us.

The true Reason why we kindle our Anger against our Christian Brethren that are not intirely of our Party is, because we not only have the Vanity to fancy ourselves always in the Right, and them in the Wrong; but we judge their Consciences and their Sincerity too, that they did not come honestly and fairly by their Principles, while we never consider how we ourselves came by our own.

VI.



VI. But there are still more Ways to arrive at this Uncharitable Temper: I must proceed to *Sixthly*; which is a common Method, and thus to be performed. If we will but *trace the Principles of those that dissent from us through all the Length of remote and feeble Consequences, and be sure to find some terrible Absurdity at the End of them*, we shall not easily maintain our Charity. O how often do we put their Opinions upon the Rack! we torture every Joint and Article of them, 'till we have forced them to confess some formidable Errors which their Authors never knew or dream'd of: Thus the Original Notions appear with a frightful Aspect, and the Sectators of them grow to be the Object of our Abhorrence, and have forfeited their Right to every Grain of our Charity.

*Evangello* believes that *Christ Jesus* has compleatly answered the Demands of the Law in order to our Justification, and that in the room and stead of all Believers. *Nomineus* hears this Doctrine, and thus begins his Chain of severe and false Deductions; then (saith he) the Law has no Power to demand Obedience of us; then we are not to be charged with Sin, though we break the Law hourly and profanely; then we may condemn all the Commands, sport with the Threatnings, and defy God the Law-giver and the Avenger. He proceeds then

ESSAY to pronounce *Evangello* a wicked *Antinomian*, and in the Name of the Lord delivers  
 VII. *him up to Satan, that he may learn not to blaspheme.* *Evangello*, on the other Hand, (who has been well instructed in the Way of Salvation, and has learned the Duties of Faith and Hope, but is not yet so well improved in the Charity of the Gospel) hears *Nomineus* preaching up Repentance and sincere Obedience, as the Conditions of our Justification and Acceptance with God to Eternal Life: He smites his Breast with his Hand, and cries, Surely this Man knows no Use of *Christ* in our Religion, he makes void his Righteousness and his Death, he is a mere Legalist, a Papist, a rank Socinian, he preaches another Gospel, and though he were an Angel from Heaven let him be accursed. Thus when Men dress up their Neighbours in all the strained Consequences of their Opinions, with a malicious Pleasure they pursue this Thread of Argument, they impose horrid Conclusions which can never be drawn from their Doctrines, and never leave the Pursuit till they have push'd each other to Blasphemy and Damnation.

Whereas if the Doctrines and the Persons now mentioned were put into the Balances of Truth and Charity, perhaps the Principles of *Evangello* would be found to have most Weight of Scripture on their Side, and *Nomineus* more of the fair Shews  
 of

of Reasoning: But neither the one would *ESSAY*  
 be found to throw *Christ* out of his Reli- *VII.*  
 gion, nor the other to make void the Law: ~~~~~  
 And both of their Lives would appear shin-  
 ing in Holiness, but that they want the  
 bright Garments of Charity.

*VII.* Let me name a *Seventh* Spring of  
 this uncharitable Humour; and that is,  
*when we magnify circumstantial Differences*  
*into substantial ones, and make every Puncti-*  
*lio of our own Scheme a fundamental Point,*  
 as though all the Law and the Prophets  
 hung upon it, as though it were the Ground  
 and Pillar of all the Truth in the Gospel.  
*Crucius* will not allow his dissenting Neigh-  
 bour to be a Member of the Christian Church,  
 because he separates from the Modes of  
 Worship in the Church of *England*; he can't  
 believe him to be a Friend to *Christ* cruci-  
 fied, because he refuses to have his Child  
 baptized with the airy Sign of the Cross.  
 Again the dissenting Neighbour pronounces  
*Crucius* to be a mere Formalist, and to have  
 nothing of the Spirit of God in him, because  
 he seeks not much to obtain the Gifts of  
 the Spirit, and scarce ever addresses him-  
 self to God in Prayer without the Assistance  
 of a Form.

*Sabbaptes* that lives within two Doors of  
 them, will not believe either of his Neigh-  
 bours to be a Christian, because they have  
 never been plunged under Water, (*i. e.*) in  
 his



ESSAY his Sense they were never baptized: And

VII. both of them in Requital agree to call *Sab-*

*bapt*es a *Jew*, because he worships only on a *Saturday*. Whereas the All-knowing God looks down into all their Hearts, beholds the Graces that his Spirit hath wrought there, owns them all for his Children and the Disciples of his Son, though they are not yet perfect in Love. They have all one common God and Father, one Lord Jesus, one Faith, one Spirit of Prayer, one Baptism, though they quarrel so bitterly about Times, and Modes, and Forms.

'Tis a very uncharitable Practice to think that a Man can never journey safely to Heaven unless his Hat and Shoes be of the same Colour with ours, unless he tread the very Tract of our Feet, and his Footsteps too be of the same Size. 'Tis a censorious and perverse Fancy to pronounce a Man no Christian because every Thought of his Soul, and all the Atoms of his Brain are not just ranged in the same Posture with mine. How ridiculously unreasonable is it for a Man of brown Hair to shut his Brother out from the Rank and Species of Men, and call him an Ox or a Lion because his Locks are black or yellow. I am perswaded there is a Breadth in the narrow Road to Heaven, and Persons may travel more than seven a Breast in it: And though they do not trace precisely the same Track, yet all look to the same

same Saviour *Jesus*, and all arrive at the same common Salvation: And though their Names may be crossed out of the Records of a particular Church on Earth, where Charity fails, yet they will be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life, which is a Record of Eternal Love, and shall for ever be join'd to the Fellowship of the Catholick Church in Heaven.

VIII. This Iniquity of Uncharitableness has more Springs than there are Streams or Branches belonging to the great River of *Egypt*; and 'tis as fruitful of Serpents and Monsters too: Itself is a *Hydra* of many Heads; I have drawn seven of them out at Length into open Light, that they may be cut off for ever: But there are others still remain as full of Fire and Infection. Shall I mention an *Eighth* here, The *Applause of a Party, and the Advance of Self-Interest*? Have we never observed what a mighty Prevalence this has over the Hearts and Tongues of Men, and inflames them with Malice against their Neighbours? They assault every different Opinion with Rage and Clamour: They rail at the Persons of all other Parties to ingratiate themselves with their own; and when they find their Account in it, their Tongues are sharpened as drawn Swords; they fight for Honour like young Volunteers, or like the *Switzers* for Pay. When they tear away Men from their Habitations, cast them into noisom Prisons, and put to  
Death

ESSAY Death the Ministers of the Gospel, they  
 VII. boast, like *Jehu* when he slew the Priests  
 of *Baal*, *Come and see my Zeal for the Lord:*  
 And as he design'd hereby to establish the  
 Kingdom in his own Hands, so they to main-  
 tain the Preferments and Possessions, as well  
 as the Reputation they had acquired among  
 their own Sect. But ah! How little do they  
 think of the Wounds that *Jesus* the Lord  
 receives by every bitter Reproach they cast  
 on his Followers! Nor will it be found a suf-  
 ficient Reason for the Persecution of them  
 one Day, that they did not conform to hu-  
 man Inventions.

The *Jansenists* in *France* have made some  
 Reformation in the Doctrines of *Popery*,  
 and they have been sometimes traduced for  
 approaching the Tents of *Calvin*: They  
 have been in Danger of being degraded and  
 losing their spiritual Dignities, and they  
 are pushed on by this Fear and Ambition,  
 to write at every Turn some severe Invec-  
 tives against the *Calvinists*, to shew that  
 themselves are true Sons of that unchari-  
 table Church of *Rome*.

*Sicco* has lately departed from a *Baptist*  
 Society, and he hardly thinks himself suf-  
 ficiently come out of the Water, 'till he is  
 kindled into a Flame against all those that  
 baptize by Immersion; he rails at his former  
 Brethren, to make the *Presbyterian* and *In-*  
*dependent* Churches believe that he is a true  
 Convert:



Convert: How art thou mistaken, poor *Sicco*, ESSAY  
to attempt this Method of careſſing thy new VII.  
Acquaintance? For they had rather receive  
a *Baptiſt* into their Fellowship, whoſe Faith  
and Holineſs are conſpicuous in his Life, than  
open their Doors to an uncharitable Wretch  
that proves his Converſion only by the  
Change of an Opinion, and placing his Re-  
ligion in Railing.

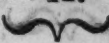
*Acerbion* has left the Communion of his  
Father, and is become an Eccleſiaſtic of high  
note in a more powerful and ſplendid Church:  
He ſeldom puts a Volume into the Preſs  
without Sowerneſs and hard Words in it,  
againſt the Society which he has forſaken:  
His Pen is dipt in Gall daily, and he grows  
old in Malice and Censure: 'Tis Pity he  
ſhould ſo far expoſe the Church to which  
he now belongs, as to think that ſhe will  
eſteem him a more dutiful Son, by how  
much the leſs Charity he has for his diſſenting  
Brethren.

And I am ſorry alſo, that there ſhould  
be a Church in *Great Britain* which has de-  
voted Chriſtians to the Devil for little Dif-  
ferences, and has expoſed them to tedious  
and ſharp Sufferings for refuſing to ſubmit  
to particular Geſtures in Worſhip and airy  
Signs, for wearing a ſhort Garment in Prayer  
in the Place of a long one, or black inſtead  
of white; and ſome of her Sons have de-  
lighted to execute theſe Cenfures, when  
they

ESSAY they have found much Gain arising from  
 VII. this severe Godliness. I could wish she had  
 always exercised the same Charity to weak  
 Consciences that she does to slender Purfes;  
 for she allows a Christian Liberty to *poor*  
*Beneficed Men and Curates, not being able*  
*to provide themselves long Gowns, that they*  
*may go in short ones.*

IX. A *Ninth* Spring of this Uncharitable Practice is *fixing upon some necessary and special Point in Christianity, and setting it up in Opposition to the rest, or at best in Opposition to some one of the rest.*

“ I have long observed, says an ingenious Writer, that *Christians of different Parties* have been eagerly laying hold on *particular Parts* of the *System of divine Truths*, and have been contending about them as if *each* had been *all*; or as if the Separation of the Members from each other, and from the Head, were the Preservation of the Body, instead of its Destruction. They have been zealous to espouse the Defence, and to maintain the Honour and Usefulness of *each apart*; whereas their Honour as well as Usefulness, seems to me to lye much in *their Connexion*: And Suspensions have often arisen betwixt the respective Defenders of each, which have appeared as unreasonable and absurd, as if all the Preparations for securing one part of a Ship in a Storm  
 “ were

“ were to be censured as a Contrivance to  
 “ sink the rest.” Thus far Dr. Doddridge ESSAY VII.  
 in a late Preface. 

And I think we may as well borrow the  
 Similitude expressly from the Scripture itself,  
 1 Cor. xii. 14, &c. *The Body is not one  
 Member, but many. If the Foot shall say,  
 because I am not the Hand, is it therefore  
 not of the Body? And how ridiculous would  
 it be if we should suppose the Ear shall say,  
 because I am not the Eye, I am not of the  
 Body. If the whole Body were an Eye, where  
 were the Hearing? If the whole were Hear-  
 ing, where were the Smelling? And if they  
 were all one Member, where were the Body?  
 The Eye cannot say unto the Hand, I have no  
 need of thee; nor again, the Head to the Feet,  
 I have no need of you; Now ye are the Body  
 of Christ, and Members in particular.*

In the same manner, *Repentance, Faith  
 and Love* are three necessary Graces or Vir-  
 tues that go to make up a *Christian*; and I  
 might cite several Texts of Scripture, where  
 each of these three are made necessary to  
 Christianity. Is it not therefore a most un-  
 reasonable thing to set up either *Repentance,  
 Faith* or *Love* so high, as tho' the whole of  
*Christianity* was contained in it, when it is  
 evident that nothing else can make a *Chri-  
 stian* but such a Faith as brings with it Re-  
 pentance and Good Works, or Holiness of  
 Life, or such a Love as produces Obedience  
 and



ESSAY and Good Works, which must be the Effect of this Faith?

~~~~~ In Christianity *nothing avails but such a Faith as works by Love* unto all Holiness, *Gal. v. 6. Repent and believe the Gospel*, was the first preaching of *Christ* and his Apostles, *Mark i. 15.* And in other Places, Faith is indispensably coupled with Repentance, *Acts iii. 19. xx. 21.* Without Repentance our Sins will not be forgiven us. Without Faith in *Jesus Christ* we have no Interest in his Salvation. True *Faith* must be such as *purifies the Heart*, *Acts xv. 9.* And produces Good Works as the necessary Evidences to prove our Faith true, *James ii. 17, 18.*

What a strange sort of monstrous Christian would this be, who pretended to much Faith, but had no Love nor Repentance? And as monstrous would that Pretender be, who had Love or Repentance without Faith. As *God hath set the Members of the Body, every one of them as it hath pleased him*, so has he appointed *Faith, Repentance* and *Love* to fulfil their several Offices in the Christian Life. What a piece of Madness therefore is it, and high Inconsistency to separate those Things which *God hath joined in his Gospel*? or to preach or paraphrase very long and talk very much upon e'er a one of these, so as to hinder that due Respect that is to be paid to the other two? There is no Man is or can be a true Believer in *Christ*, if he has

not *Repentance* and *Love*, producing good Essay Works, as well as that *Faith* which is ne- VII. cessary to make a Christian. Let us take heed therefore, lest we give Occasion by any of our Discourses to exalt one of these Virtues or Graces to the Prejudice of the rest, for the utter Loss of either of them will destroy all our Pretences to Christianity.

When *Solfido* has formed one of his Christians exactly agreeable to the Shape and Humour of his own Imagination, and dressed him up in all the Feathers of strict Orthodoxy that he can find in the severest Writers, and by a Motto written upon his Forehead has called him the *Man of Faith*, I am at a Loss to know what Christian Church would receive him into their Communion, when he neither professes *Repentance*, nor *Holiness*, nor true *Love* to God or Man. It has indeed some of the Appearances of a *Christian* Statue, but it is a Man without Feet or Hands for walking or moving, a Man without Life or Activity to run the Christian Race, or to do any thing for God in the World. What Glory can our Lord *Jesus Christ* receive from such a useless Figure? What Honour can such an imperfect Image possibly bring to the Gospel; Or what Service can he be of in the World or in the Church?

X. The most common Cause of Uncharitableness, and the last I shall mention, is,

U

that

ESSAY that a great Part of the Professors of our  
 VII. holy Religion, make their Heads the chief  
 ~~~~~ Seat of it, and scarce ever suffer it to descend  
 and warm their Hearts. Jesus the Saviour  
 has been discovered to them in a good degree of outward Light, but has never been revealed in them with Power, nor their Souls changed by Divine Grace into the Image of the Gospel. While they boast of their Orthodox Faith they forget their Christian Love.

*Stellino* has stuck his Brain all over with Notions, and fancies his higher Sphere sufficiently illuminated for the Conduct of Mankind, that's round about him, and beneath him : But this Set of Notions is like a Winter-night overhung with Stars; bright and shining, but very cold. Natural Affections have no room in his Soul, 'tis too much Spiritualized with Opinions and Doctrines. His Divinity lies all in his Understanding, and the common Duties of Humanity scarce ever employ his Tongue or his Hands.

If a Man does but profess every Tittle of his Creed, and believe just as *Stellino* believes, he is declared fit for Holy Communion ; and if he will but dispute warmly for the hard Words that distinguish his Scheme, and can pronounce *Shibboleth* well, he shall not be adjudged to Death or Damnation, but joined heartily to the Fellowship of the  
 Saints,



Saints, tho' his flaming Immoralities pro-ESSAY  
claim him a Son of *Satan*: *Satan* himself VII.  
has perhaps a more accurate and nice Skill  
of the Controversies of Divinity, than the  
best of our Professors and Doctors have ar-  
rived at; but his Pride and Malice are  
Chains of Darkness, and make a Devil of  
him in spite of all his Knowledge: Yet  
*Stellino* affects too near a Resemblance to  
*Lucifer*, that fallen Son of the Morning.

Vices that are odious to human Nature,  
and wild Licentiousnesses of a bitter Tongue  
which destroy all civil Society, are very lit-  
tle Faults in his Opinion, when put into the  
Balance with Orthodoxy and Zeal. If my  
Conversation among Men be blameless and  
honourable; if my Practice consist of Vir-  
tue and Piety; if I profess a solemn Faith  
in *Christ* the eternal Word, the only begot-  
ten Son of God, who came into the Flesh,  
who died to make a true Atonement for the  
Sins of Men, and testify my unfeigned Sub-  
jection to him, and declare the Grounds of  
my Hope; yet I must not be admitted to  
the special Parts of Worship where *Stellino*  
presides, because I am not arrived at his de-  
gree of Light, and differ from his Expressions  
a little, when I explain the Words *Justifica-  
tion* and the *Covenant* of Grace. His Lips are  
ever full of Declamation and Controversy,  
and he harangues copiously upon the most  
affecting Points of our Religion; he talks

ESSAY much of the amazing Condescensions of Divine Mercy, and of the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour towards Man; but it has not yet taught him Love to his Fellow-Creatures, nor Kindness towards his Brethren.

Such another Christian is *Misander*; he reverses the Duties of Christianity which St. Paul describes, *he speaks Evil of all Men* but his own Party, he is a *Brawler* and *ungentle*, *showing Meekness* unto none; and while he pretends *that the Grace of God which brings Salvation has appeared* unto him, *he lives still in Malice and Envy*, and wears the visible Characters of the Men of Heathenism, *hateful and hating one another*, 2 Tit. 11, 12. 3 Tit. 2, 3, 4. He flourishes and enlarges upon the gracious Qualities of our Redeemer, our great *High-Priest*, who is *touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities*; yet himself has not learnt from so glorious an Example to *have Compassion on them that are ignorant and out of the way*; but rather being exalted in his own Knowledge, he condemns *his weak Brother to perish, for whom Christ died*. Take thy Bible, O vain Man, and read a few Lines in the 8th Chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to Corinth. *Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifieth; and if any Man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; but if any Man love God, the same is known of him.*

him. And St. John will assure thee, *that* ESSAY  
*he that loveth not his Brother knoweth not* VII.  
*God, and if a Man say, I love God, and*  
*hateth his Brother, he is a Liar,* 1 John iv.  
 8, 20.

Yet let not any think that I advance Charity so high, as to place it in the room of Knowledge and Faith, or to make it a self-sufficient Ground for our Admittance into Heaven at last: Nor can I suppose it alone to be a sufficient Plea for a Reception into any visible Church of *Christ* on Earth. A Confession of the Name of *Jesus*, with the most important and most necessary Articles of his blessed Religion, a Declaration of my personal Faith or Trust in him, together with a solemn Dedication of myself unto the Lord, may be justly required of me by that Christian Society into which I desire Admittance. In default of these the biggest Instances of Charity will never constitute me a Christian: *Except ye believe that I am he,* saith our Saviour, *ye shall die in your Sins,* John viii. 24. *If a Man strive for a Prize, yet is he not crowned unless he strive lawfully;* (i. e.) according to the Methods prescribed in the Gospel, the Knowledge and the Faith of the Son of God, 2 Tim. ii. 5. and the Sentence of our Lord is dreadful and peremptory. *He that believeth not shall be damned,* Mark xvi. 16. *With the Heart Man believes unto Righteousness, and with*



ESSAY *the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation,*

VII. Rom. x. 10. But without Charity my Faith can never be true, for it must be such a *Faith as worketh by Love*, and discovers itself by all the *Fruits of the Spirit, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, Temperance*, Gal. v. 6, 22.

Thus far have we traced the Vice of Uncharitableness in many of the Properties that belong to it, and the Causes of it; and many Instances in which it discovers itself in the World, and in the Church; and it appears a very shameful Vice, and opposite to the Religion of the Blessed Jesus.

## S E C T. II.

*An Occasional Vindication of the Apostles from the Charge of Uncharitableness.*

But what shall we say to those who take the venerable Names of the sacred Writers, and charge them with the same scandalous Practice?

There is one *Momus*, who is well known in the World for a Person that is ready to find fault with the best of Men, and the best of Things, if he can suspect any thing which he imagines worthy of Blame in them. This Man rather than not vindicate himself from the Charge of *Uncharitableness*, he will bring even the Apostles themselves into

into the Accusation, particularly St. Paul ESSAY  
and St. John. VII.

Paul, says he, must be a very uncharitable Man, for *Heb. x. 25, 26.* He tells us, that *if we Sin wilfully after we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins.* Thus it is plain, he will not suffer a Man to be guilty of any wilful Sin, after his Profession of Christianity, but he damns him for it without Hope.

*Ans.* But I would have *Momus* consider that these are the very Words of Scripture and Inspiration, and not merely St. Paul's Opinion. Nor is the Sense true which he puts upon these Words: 'tis by no means every *wilful Sin* after we have received and professed *Christianity*, that will bring us under such an irreverfible Condemnation; but this *wilful Sin*, as it stands in the Context, plainly refers to our entire quitting the *Profession* of our *Christian Faith*, *v. 23.* and *forsaking* all *Christian Assemblies*, without Repentance or returning to them, as *v. 25.* And it is no wonder if a Man who roundly renounces Christianity *wilfully*, and without Persecution, or any Compulfion, should be laid under this dreadful Sentence.

Let it be alfo particularly remarked, that as these Verses come in juft after the Apostle had been fpeaking of the atoning *Sacrifice for Sin*, which *Chrift* himfelf offer'd, as a fulfilling of all typical Sacrifices and Atonements of

ESSAY the Jewish Law, c. ix. 10. he expresses  
 VII. this condemning Sentence in this Language,  
 ~~~~~ there is no more Sacrifice for Sin, i. e. if a  
 Man renounces the Sacrifice of Atonement  
 which Christ has made for Sin, there re-  
 mains no more Sacrifice for him to trust in,  
 or to hope for, but a certain fearful looking  
 for of Judgment and fiery Indignation, which  
 shall devour the Adversaries. Thus it appears,  
 that this wilful Sinner is condemned for  
 renouncing the only Method of Atonement  
 provided for the Pardon of Sins, which it  
 was one of the chief Glories of the Chri-  
 stian Religion to reveal and establish.

St. Paul also is charged with high Un-  
 charitableness by this Momus for what he says,  
 1 Gal. viii. 9. *If any Man preach any other  
 Gospel to you than that ye have received, let  
 him be accursed*, and yet he owns v. 7. that  
 it is not another Gospel, but merely a Per-  
 version of the Gospel of Christ; and is this  
 enough to be accursed for?

Ans<sup>r</sup>. Let Momus consider how grossly  
 the Gospel must be perverted, when it is  
 turned into such a Sense as the Galatians  
 seem to have been taught by these Troublers  
 of their Church, v. 7. it is such an Error  
 as would have carried them again into Ju-  
 daism with all its Yokes of Bondage, would  
 have obliged them to be Circumcised and to  
 observe the Jewish Festival Days, Months  
 and Years, Gal. v. 2. Such an Error as  
 shews



shews them to have run back to the Cere-  
 monies of the Jewish Law for Justifica-  
 tion and Acceptance with God, v. 4. Such  
 an Error as gave occasion to the Apostle to  
 charge them, if ye pursue it ye are fallen  
 from Grace, i.e. from the Gospel of Grace:  
 And that Christ would profit them nothing,  
 would become of no Effect to them. v. 2, and 4.

And after all it must be said these are  
 the Words of Scripture, and of the Spirit of  
 God, and not merely of St. Paul himself as  
 a private Writer; and will the Man deal  
 thus with Scripture? You see to what  
 Lengths this Temper will carry a Man.

But still he pursues his Accusation against  
 the Apostles, and makes St. John to be  
 grossly guilty of want of Charity in his 2d E-  
 pistle v. 9, 10. *If there come any unto you  
 and bring not this Doctrine, i.e. The Doc-  
 trine of Christ mention'd in the foregoing  
 Verse, receive him not into your House, nor  
 bid him God Speed; for he that biddeth him,  
 God speed, is Partaker of his evil Deeds.*

Now to answer the unreasonable Cen-  
 sure of this Momus, let us enquire what this  
*Doctrine of Christ* is; and where should we  
 find the most important Parts of it but in the  
 same Writer? Chap. i. v. 7. *The Blood of  
 Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sin.* Chap.  
 ii. v. 2. *Jesus Christ the Righteous is not  
 only our Advocate with the Father, but he  
 is also the Propitiation for our Sins,* Chap. iv.

v. 10.

ESSAY v. 10. *God loved us and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins, and that every true Christian is born of God, Chap. v. 1, 4. i. e. as other Verses of this holy Writer in his Gospel explain it, he is born of the Spirit of God, John i. 13, and iii. 5, 6.*

It appears then that the Errors of such whom the Apostle would here exclude from our Friendship, are such as do not acknowledge *Jesus Christ* to be the *Messiah*, or not to be a *propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of Men*, nor allow that every true Christian is regenerated and *born of God*, or of *his Spirit*, i. e. by the powerful, renewing and sanctifying Influences thereof as other Scriptures explain it, particularly *John i. 12, 13. John iii. 3, 5.* and as *St. Paul* expresses it, *Eph. i. 19, 20. By such a mighty Power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the Dead.*

Again, I would ask *Momus*, why are the Names of *Christ* and the *Holy Spirit* appointed so generally to be used in Baptism, which is the Ordinance which initiates us into Christianity? Is it not to put us in Mind that when we profess Christianity we profess the chief Articles that relate to him as our Saviour, (*viz.*) *Jesus Christ* to be the Propitiation for our Sins, we profess to be *born of the Spirit*, or regenerated and renewed to Holiness by the Spirit of God? Now if a Man asserts himself to be a Christian, when he

he believes and professes neither of these ESSAY  
Doctrines, then St. *John* may be to blame VII.  
indeed in denying the Benefit of common  
Christian Friendship to such a Man.

But whither would this *Momus* lead us?  
What? would he make a Christian out of  
such Adversaries to the Name and Gospel  
of *Christ*, as neither trust in him as a Pro-  
pitiator for their Sins, nor hope to be re-  
newed and made holy by the holy Spirit  
of God?

Let us learn of the *Heathen* Poet,

*Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines.*

There must be some Measures and Bounds  
set to every general Virtue, and even to  
*Christian Charity* itself. This does not ex-  
tend to Infidels in the same Sense. Surely,  
there must be due Limits set to every thing  
of this kind: They can scarce be justly called  
*Christians*, and treated as such, let their Pro-  
fession be what it will, who renounce *Jesus*  
*Christ* in his chief Design of coming into  
the World, as a Propitiator for Sin, and  
who renounce the Spirit of God as the ef-  
fectual Spring of our Regeneration and Ho-  
liness. If all *Deists* and *Infidels* may be re-  
ceived into the *Christian Church*, into our  
good Esteem and Friendship, those may also  
be our fellow Christians who deny the most  
important Principles of Christianity: But  
let



ESSAY let us take heed that we do not give that  
 VII. *which is holy to such who have no claim to it,*  
 and give Charity and Christian Friendship  
 to those, who seem, according to the Word  
 of God, to have no Pretence to it.

It has been *objected* indeed against this second as well as against the *third Epistle* of St. *John*, that they have not sufficient Proof of their divine Original: Now it would be too large in this Place to enter into a discussion of that Question: But there is nothing said in this Epistle that is disagreeable to the Sense of other holy Writers in other parts of Scripture; and by our Protestant Writers these Epistles have been generally represented as part of the Word of God in the New Testament: Nor can I find sufficient Reason to reject it, merely because some Persons that need a more abundant Measure of Indulgence and of Charity than the Scripture seems to allow, will not allow it this post of Honour, and that is because it excludes them from our Good Esteem, from *Christian* Communion and Friendship.

Yet after all this Censure of *Momus* and his Followers, if any such there be, I would still hope and persuade myself, there are some serious and pious Souls who have been honestly seeking after the Truths of Religion, and searching the Word of God to find them, who may have indulged some uncautious and unhappy Hour, wherein they  
 have

have suffered themselves to be led away into ESSAY this great Snare and Temptation of the evil VII. One; so that they have begun to doubt of this blessed Doctrine of the atoning Sacrifice for Sin by the Blood of *Jesus Christ*, tho' it is so strongly, so expressly, and so often asserted by several of the Apostles in their Writings.

'Tis my sincere and earnest Desire, that God would speedily break these unhappy Snares, whatsoever they are, by which their Thoughts have been captivated into so dangerous a Mistake, 2 *Tim.* ii. 25, 26. that he would please to open the Eyes of their Mind by his enlightening Grace, that they may not run on so far in this way as to be exposed to the Loss of the Benefit of this only Propitiation for Sin, and lay themselves open to that severe Sentence of the Word of God, that *there remains no further propitiatory Sacrifice for them, but a certain fearful Expectation, &c.* *Heb.* x. 26, 27. Forgive me, blessed *Jesus*, if any of the softer Influences of animal Nature have warped me aside, while I am treating of this glorious Virtue of Charity, to indulge these milder Sentiments, and depart in any Measure from the stricter Sense and Sentence of thy holy Word.

S E C T.

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SECT.



*The mischievous Effects of Uncharitableness.*

Now if we have not dwelt too long on this Subject, (*viz.*) in tracing out this Mischief through its several *Springs* and *Properties*, and if my Reader be not quite out of Breath, I would ask him to take another Turn with me and walk down to a short Survey of the same Vice in its *mischievous Effects*; that we may be more warmly animated to pursue this Iniquity to the Death: If it were possible, we would leave it neither Root nor Branch, Name or Memory in the Christian World.

I. The first and most obvious Mischiefs I meet with among Christians of an uncharitable Humour, are the constant Disquiet of their own Spirits, the Vexation they give their Neighbours, the Injury they do to their own Edification, and to the Edification of all that converse with them.

*Singulario* has a Sett of Notions and Rules whereby he adjusts his own Creed and his Practice; and whatsoever he hears in Religious Conference, or in publick Duty, that does not precisely square to his Model, disquiets his Ears, disrelishes with his Taste, disturbs his Conscience, and thus prevents all the Benefit that his Soul should receive from the Discourse, or Worship.

I grant it very lawful for a Man to be ESSAY VII.  
 disgusted with a Sermon, where the greatest part is spent in Notions contrary to his Judgment, and drest up in Language very foreign to his usual way of Converse about divine Things; this is shocking to the Spirit of the best Christians, and the Conscience is so nauseated with the largest part of the Entertainment that his Soul cannot be nourished, and 'tis proper for him to forbear Attendance upon such a Preacher, and chuse one more suited to the Temper of his own Spirit. But *Singulario* hath an Aversion to a whole Hour's Discourse, because there were three Sentences of a Strain different from his Opinion. He reaps no Blessing from a Sermon of excellent Composure, of divine Materials, of an evangelick Frame and just Method, because there's one Expression in it that is the Characteristick of another Sect. He sits uneasy under a noble Discourse of Justification or of Faith, because (it may be) the Minister doth avoid the Terms *Imputed*, *Meritorious*, *Condition*, and *Instrument*; and mentions none of the tortured Words of Noise and Party.

I will not indeed commend a Preacher that is always affecting to disguise his own Opinions, and for ever hiding himself in ambiguous Language, and that in Points of Moment, thereby to maintain the everlasting Applause of all Sides. But I must chide  
*Singulario*



ESSAY *Singulario* for the wry Faces he makes at  
 VII. Church when he hears but a Word or two  
 of contrary Sound, or when his Ears miss  
 and long for a Sett of darling Phrases.

Three Years ago I was in Company with *Acharissa*, a four old Christian of a very narrow Spirit, and gave her a gentle Admonition for the frequent Reproaches she cast on the Ministers of *Christ*, that did not preach exactly according to her Humour; I blamed that petulant Liberty which she took with all her Neighbours and Acquaintance, to censure them severely for every lesser Difference of Practice or Worship: I recommended to her reading that valuable Sermon of the Reverend Dr. *Tillotson* against Evil-speaking; but I could not persuade her to peruse those few Pages, not only because of that strong Propensity she had to speak Evil of others, but because 'twas the Work of an Arch-Bishop; "which  
 " sort of Office, said she, is a mere Human  
 " Invention, and the Scripture knows  
 " it not." I know another Name which has the same narrow Spirit. *Sequilla* hath ever given up the Conduct of her Soul to the Curate of her Parish, and after many Years Attendance on his Ministry, in great Security of Conscience, is well assured that she shall go to Heaven at last. Perhaps by some terrible Providence, or by some plain Word of Scripture, she is awakened to

a deep and frightful Sense of Sin, and Danger of Eternal Death. She is visited by the Curate, and though he saith some good things to her, yet she finds not the Way of Peace. A kind Neighbour recommends to her some Book of Consolation written by a Dissenter, but she refuses the Book and the Comfort at once, lest she should be guilty of that damnable Sin of Separation from the Church. "How can I ever, said she, expect the Peace of God from the Pen of a Schismatick? And thus endures the Racks of Conscience rather than she will indulge Charity enough to hear or to read what a Non-conformist hath written.

*Presbycolo* a Christian of the same Stamp, heard a Sermon lately and commended it above measure, confessed how much Light and Love was kindled in his Heart by it, and bestowed unusual Strains of Respect upon the Minister: But *Presbycolo* (said I) "This Man never had the Hands of a Bishop, or preaching Elder, laid upon his Head to ordain him." At once I saw his Colour change, his Spirits sink, and he concluded that all the divine Affections in his Soul under that Sermon must needs be counterfeit, "because now I know (said he) the Preacher is no Minister of *Christ*." O the wretched Influence of this Vice of Uncharitableness upon feeble and deluded Souls! It proceeds so far at last as to make

ESSAY Persons scrupulous of attending upon any  
 VII. Ordinance, lest the Administrator should not  
 be a Man exactly of their Stamp. Thus  
 their Hearts are vex'd with everlasting Dis-  
 quiet, for they can hardly hear a Prayer, or  
 an Exhortation, but they find some Offence  
 in it; like a Man with a Thorn in his  
 Hand, whatsoever he takes hold of gives him  
 Pain, but the Cause lies in his own Flesh.

There are other Instances of this Kind to  
 be met with in the World. *Nitidelli* wears  
 his Hair three Inches below his Shoulders,  
 and 'tis ever well beautified with Powder:  
 He frequently eats of a Dish of Food where  
 Blood is one of the Ingredients, and he often  
 takes half a Pint of red Wine to his own  
 Share: He maintains serious Religion at Home  
 and abroad: But *Censorina* cannot join with  
 him in the special Ordinances of Worship.  
 " It is a shame for him (she cries) to wear  
 " long Hair; he is a Wine-bibber, and he  
 " abstains not from Blood; nor can I be re-  
 " conciled to him upon any Terms, unless  
 " he retrench these horrible Excesses. But  
 he still goes on careless and regardless of the  
 Peace of his Fellow-Christian, and scorns  
 her little Clamours, rather than endeavours,  
 by Gentleness and Compliance, to satisfy or  
 remove them. *Now walkest thou not chari-  
 tably, O Nitidelli, for thou grievest thy Sister  
 with thy Meat and Garments, for whom Christ  
 died.* But I would fain have *Censorina* learn  
 also



also *that the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.* Both of you therefore ought to follow after the things which make for Peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. Rom. xiv. 15, 17, 19. ESSAY VII.

Nor is this Mischief confin'd to single Persons: It makes a farther Progress still, and infects the Neighbour and Acquaintance. Every Monday in the Evening *Crites* sits at the Head of a Club that meet together to arraign and sentence the Sermons of the foregoing Day. "Did you mark, my Friends, such an Expression under the fourth Head? It sounded harsh in my Ears. Surely the Man is not Orthodox; pray acquaint your Families of the Danger of his Opinions, and forbid their Attendance. Truly, replies *Momion*, he insisted so much on the Grace of God, that he left but one quarter of his Hour-Glass for the Duties of the Gospel; I fear he's a *Supralapsarian*, my Spirit rises against him, and I must warn my Acquaintance of his Doctrine."

A third Person in the Company begins to surmise that his Morals are not good: "I have heard an ill Story of a Preacher not long since, saith he, and surely this must be the Man?" And then he proceeds in a direct Opposition to the Grace of Charity, as it is described by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xii. 5. Tit. iii. 3. "I easily believe all that is

ESSAY "evil of him; I am provoked at him; I  
 VII. "hope no Good from him; I cannot bear  
 ~~~~~ "his Principles; I cannot endure his Per-  
 "son; and I should rejoice *in the seasonable*  
 "Death of such an Antinomian as this is."

Thus does the Root of Bitterness spring up into wide Branches, it bears poisonous Fruit, and many Souls are troubled. Blessed be God who of late Years begins to purge out this sour Leaven from amongst us.

II. The next pernicious Effect I take Notice of, is, that an *uncharitable Carriage brings a Disgrace and Blemish upon Christianity, beyond the Guilt and Scandal of Heathenism*: 'Tis the Character of the Gentiles indeed, that they were *bateful and hating one another*; but not for different Principles of Philosophy which they profess'd, nor different Methods of Worship, which they paid to their Gods. There were no Civil Wars proclaimed, nor Courts of Inquisition erected amongst them upon this Account, though their Controversies about divine Things were not trivial, and they differ'd widely in the very Foundations of Religion; and, as an ingenious Author expresses himself on this Subject, *Tho' Poets have made the Gods enter into Factions and Quarrels for Common-wealths, yet Common-wealths never did the same for their Gods.*

But if the Heathens had been never so much intraged, and quarreled never so fiercely for the sake of Opinions, and Formalities; still  
 2 they

they were almost infinitely more excusable ESSAY  
than Christians can pretend to be: For the VII.  
very Doctrines of most of their Sects permit  
Revenge; and they have many a bloody Principle amongst them. But Christianity is the most mild, the most gentle, and the most peaceable Religion: Never a Doctrine was taught amongst Mankind, that hath so much of Love and Sweetness in it: Never a System, or Rule of Duties, wherein Meekness and Candor, Charity and Compassion are so prescribed, and enforced.

Never was there a Religion instituted by God or invented by Men, with so much Goodness in the Heart and Soul of it, or so many Charms and Amiabilityes in the Face. 'Tis built upon the Foundation of God's Eternal and Unchangeable Love. 'Twas Love that assumed Human Nature, and became the great Prophet and Teacher of it, and the Spirit of Love in our Hearts is its Vital Spring within us: 'Tis divine Love dwelling in Flesh, hanging upon a Cross, bleeding and dying for Enemies and Rebels that hath purchased all the promised Blessings of our Religion; and 'tis the same Love arising from the Grave, and reigning in Glory, that distributes these Blessings to Men: And in all the melting Language of Compassion and Tenderness invites us to receive them: 'Twas this Love dwelling personally amongst Men, calls himself our Brother, and charges us to



ESSAY love all the Professors of the same Faith as

VII. Brethren: He requires that we should be ready to lay down our Lives for one another, as he did for us all: And orders it to be the distinguishing Character of all his Followers, *Hereby shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another,* John xiii. 34, 35.

God himself is infinite and unseen Love, *Christ* is Love incarnate and visible: And a Christian is or should be an Effigy of that Love graven to the Life, by the Finger of the divine Spirit. Now, for the Professors of such a Doctrine to quarrel about Trifles, and grow malicious upon every Punctilio of different Sentiments, how grossly do they abuse the Christian Name? They rob their own Religion of its due Honour amongst Men, and bring infinite Shame and Discredit upon Christianity in the Face of Infidel Nations. 'Tis for the sake of this Madness which is found amongst the pretended Followers of our blessed Lord, his Name is blasphemed among the Heathens; and the Conversion of the Kingdoms of this World to the Faith of *Christ*, rendered almost rationally impossible.

III. *Thirdly*, This uncharitable Temper rages even to Wars and Blood; hath laid the Churches of *Christ* desolate, and dispeopled many Countries in *Christendom*. It doth not spend itself in secret like a fullen Humour,  
or

or a Vapour of Melancholy, but breaks out ESSAY into publick Violence and Disorder, and VII. all that's near it feels the Indignation. It fits brooding over the Eggs of a Cockatrice, and daily sends forth a fiery flying *Serpent*, *Instruments of Cruelty are in its Habitation*, and all its Children are Sons of Blood and Rapine.

*O my Soul, come thou not into their Council; unto their Assembly mine Honour be not thou united; for in their Anger they have slain Millions of Men, and in their Self-will they have digged up the Foundations of a Thousand Churches. Cursed be their Anger for it is fierce, and their Wrath for it is cruel.* These Men of Division at the last Judgment Day, may justly expect to be divided from *Jacob*, and to be scattered far away from the *Israel* of God. *For God will render to every one according to their Works.* And surely these bloody Persecutions are such Works as demand like Revenges from a God of Justice; if such as practise them die without Repentance.

If you ask me the Method whereby this uncharitable Temper has advanced to such a Degree of Rage and Barbarity, 'tis very obvious and easy to be explained. At first these Men assume to themselves the Name of the Church, and lodge in themselves a Sort of Infallibility, or at least pretend to a divine Authority to determine finally all

ESSAY doubtful Cases of Religion, and to rule over  
 VII. the Consciences of Men. They set up the  
 wretched Trade of Creed-making, and demand the Belief of Mankind: Then they give out Decrees, such as *Christ* and his Apostles never gave, and pronounce Damnation against all that doubt or disbelieve them; though their Fables are not cunningly devised, because they are made too big for Belief. Some of them contradict the most substantial Principles of Sense, Reason and Christianity.

You will see this plainly exemplified in a few Instances I shall give of their Decrees and Canons. As, *Whosoever shall affirm that there are more or less than seven Sacraments, let him be anathematiz'd, excommunicated, or accursed: Whosoever shall affirm that the Substance of Bread and Wine remains in the Eucharist, together with the Body and Blood of Christ, or shall deny the wonderful Change of the whole Substance of Bread into Body, and Wine into Blood, which the Catholick Church calls Transubstantiation, let him be excommunicated: Whosoever shall say, that extreme Unction doth not confer Grace, nor remit Sin, nor ease the Sick, let him be excommunicated.* \* Thus oftentimes the same Anathema and eternal Death is denounced against such as disobey their Decrees about Matters of trifling  
 Im.

\* Canons of the Church of Rome in the Council of Trent.



Importance; Matters which they themselves ESSAY can never pretend to be, in their own Nature, VII. necessary to Salvation. *He that shall say a common Minister can confirm as well as a Bishop, let him be excommunicated: He that shall say, the Ceremonies, the Vestments, &c. in the Celebration of the Mass, are Incentives to Sin, rather than Duties of Piety, let him be excommunicated: He that shall say, a Priest may become a Layman again, let him be excommunicated: And whosoever shall say that the Hierarchy of Bishops, Presbyters, and Ministers or Deacons is not of Divine Ordination, let him be excommunicated.*

When this Church has thus excommunicated and cursed Christians better than her self, and cast them out of her Arms, she gives them up to the secular Power, \* with an awful and deceitful Charge, that the obstinate Heretick shall not be hurt in Life or Limb; but with a full Design that they should be tortured, and destroyed. Having solemnly delivered them to the Devil in their Spiritual Courts, the temporal Executioner sends them out of the World; not that their Souls may be saved in the Day of the Lord, but that they may be plung'd immediately into utter Darkness, where *Satan* dwells.

'Tis the Command of *Christ* to the *Roman* Church, by *Paul* the great Apostle, *Rom. xiv. 1. That such as were weak in the Faith*

\* See the History of the Inquisition.

ESSAY *Faith should be received to their Fellowship.*

VII. *and not troubled with doubtful Disputations.*

such as the Observance of Meats and Days, and Things of like Moment : But the *Romans* have now so far rebel'd against this Rule, as to admit Persons into their Communion upon no other Terms than a blind Submission to all the doubtful Disputables which that Church imposes. They had an Order from *St. Paul*, *Rom. xv. 7. to receive all such as Christ had received*; and consequently to reject no others but those whom *Christ* rejects; but they forgot this charitable Canon of our Lord, while they receive Thousands to their Communion which have no visible Marks of the Image of *Christ*, and reject Thousands, and curse them to Hell, whom the Lord *Christ* will acknowledge for his, and pronounce them blessed of his Father at the last Day.

When they first begin to assume this Sovereignty over Faith and Conscience, they use a Shew of Argument, and pretend to instruct and enlighten the Weak and the Ignorant. They admonish them to hearken to the Church; but if the Ignorant are still weak in Belief, and cannot be convinced of the Lawfulness of their Ceremonies; then they send the Sheriff and the Jailor to carry on the Dispute; a Prison and the Gibbet are the next Arguments; and when Reason and Scripture will not assist them, they employ Fire and Sword to contend earnestly for the Fables

Fables that were never delivered to the ESSAY  
*Saints.* VII.

To draw up an Account of the horrible Effects of Uncharitableness would be to transcribe the Ecclesiastical History of many Ages: Whole Churches and Quarters of the World, the Eastern and Western, have damned one another plentifully upon the Account of imposed Days, and Trifles which the Gospel leaves indifferent, or rather forbids. How many of the Canons of ancient Councils have been influenc'd in their Formation by this assuming Spirit, and as terribly enforced in their Execution to the Reproach and Devastation of *Christendom*?

But it moves my Grief and Wonder, that a modern Church that pretends not to Infallibility should assume a strange Dominion over our Faith and Practice. It asserts its own *Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and Authority in Controversies of Faith*; when in the very preceeding Words it confesses, that *the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the Church of Rome has erred, not only in their Living and Manner of Ceremonies, but also in Matters of Faith.* It demands my Admiration, that such a Church should canonically denounce her Excommunications in abundance, against those that dissent from her in some disputable Things, while they retain all her professed Doctrines of the Christian Faith.

And



ESSAY And 'tis a Pain and a Shame to our Eyes  
 VII. to look backward upon other Times, and  
 ~~~~~ to behold Pamphlets written against Tole-  
 ration by such as are Ministers of the Gospel  
 of Peace, that perfect Law of Liberty.  
 'Twas their Opinion then, (and they told  
 the World so in Print) that *Seſtaries* ought  
 to be silenced by the Civil Power: Now  
*Seſtary* is a Name of broad Dimensions,  
 and has a terrible Stretch with it; the  
 long Scourge would in Time reach all those  
 who differ from the Hand that manages that  
 Weapon of Chastisement: None must be  
 authorized to preach in any Form, but by  
 the Solemnity of imposing Hands, by a  
 Company of authorized Men. Because  
 some subjected themselves to the Determi-  
 nation of a Synod, they would make it the  
 Duty of all their Neighbours to wear the  
 same Yoke; and thought others were  
 bound to become Slaves to the same Dic-  
 tates. But I forbear this Charge, and al-  
 most wish it cancelled: For as the Magi-  
 strate did not put in practice the uncharita-  
 ble Pamphlets, so those Reverend and Ho-  
 nourable Writers have been taught to ac-  
 knowledge the Mistake of their Zeal, when  
 their own verbal Rods have been turned a-  
 gainst them, and became real Scorpions  
 with Stings and Scourges a thousand-fold.  
 The Fathers have been dearly instructed in  
 the Value of Toleration and Liberty by  
 most

most abundant Retaliations. The Children ESSAY have learned to preach this Part of the Gospel well, and I'm persuaded they'll never forget it again. VII.

If we turn over more ancient Annals, the *Marian* Days give us horrible Examples of fiery Zeal in the Clergy, and the glorious Reign of the succeeding Virgin-Princess is hardly to be purged from the Stain of Blood. Blessed be God who has put into the Heart of our Civil Governors to restrain the Fury of all Spiritual Administrators. The long and dreadful Train of *Capias's* and Goalers, Prisons and Plunderings, Ruin and Banishment, Silencings and violent Suppressions are no longer the Attendants of the Anathemas of any Church among us. And I hope no Church mourns the Loss of them; tho' there are some Anathemas that abide still as Terrors to those that are weak in Faith, and not very honourable Monuments of that Church's Charity.

In these late Years the Scene of *Great Britain* was a little Shadow of *Spain* and *France*, where Dragoons and the Inquisition manage Ecclesiastical Discipline. We were brought to the very Gates of *Acedama*. The Agents of *Rome* were ready with their Instruments of Death. Adored be the Divine Spirit that awaken'd the Rulers of the Church to behold the common

ESSAY mon Danger, and rais'd in them generous

VII. Resolutions and Promises to exercise Charity and Temper towards their Brethren. Glory to that God whose kind Providence sent us a Deliverer, and forbid *England* to become a Field of Blood and Martyrdom : And new Songs of Praise are still due unto Divine Mercy, for establishing the Person and Heart of our Queen in the Throne and the Principles of so glorious an Example and Predecessor. Her gentle Government subdues the Hearts of all her People to herself ; her Charity joins their Affections to one another ; her parental Care and Love reconciles Christian Parties, and her Wisdom unites Christian Nations.

IV. The last Mischief I shall mention, and which should fright us terribly from the Peril of it, is, that *an uncharitable Man wounds the very Vitals of that Religion, by which he hopes for Eternal Life* : And whilst his Fury rages against his Brother for accidental Differences, he shakes the very Foundations of his own Christianity, and endangers or prevents his own Salvation ; his boasted Orthodoxy in Opinion is made vain, while his practical Ungodlinesses are so real ; and his Faith appears to be little better than that of Devils, when he mingles so much of their Malice with it. In vain does he glory in the Brightness of his Notions ; in vain doth he presume *Darkness*  
is



is past, and the true Light now shineth: For **ESSAY**  
 he that sayeth he is in the Light and hateth **VII.**  
 his Brother, he abides in Darknes, even till  
 now, 1 John ii. 8, 9.

Such a Wisdom composed of mere Opinion and Wrath can never lead aright up to Heaven, for it did not descend from thence: *The Wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy, and the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace of them that make Peace: But if ye have bitter Envyng and Strife in your Hearts, glory not.* Whatever your Pretences of Truth be, *this is but lying against the Truth: This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, carnal, devilish, Jam. iii. 14, &c.* 'Tis impossible there should be true Faith without sincere Love: *If I understand all Mysteries, and have all Knowledge, if I speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and were destitute of Charity, my Pretensions to Religion are the mere Sound of noisy Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.* 'Tis such a Charity that *suffereth long, that is not easily provoked, that beareth all things, and believeth all things, that taketh all Things in the best Sense, and thinketh no Evil: 'Tis such a Charity as this that is a substantial Part of our Religion.* Charity  
 in

ESSAY in the Heart, is absolutely required to make  
 VII. up inward Christianity ; and the Appearance  
 of it in the Life is a most necessary Part of  
 Godliness.

'Tis true indeed, that all Graces and Virtues are very imperfect in this present State, and there is much of Uncharitableness remaining in many a good Man : But that Man can never be good that has no Charity. *Zelus* has spent his Life in declaiming against some little Modes and Gestures used in Worship by his Fellow Christians, or in imposing some uninstituted Ceremonies on the Consciences of his Brethren. He hath stir'd up the Magistrate to persecute some of them to Prisons, and almost to Death. He flatter'd his Conscience with Hopes that his Zeal for the Church should not only render him acceptable at the last Day, but provide him a large Reward : He lies now languishing upon a Bed of Sickness, on the very Borders of Eternity, and is terribly awaken'd to behold his own Mistake ; while he stands within Sight of the Tribunal of *Christ*, and the Face of the Judge, his former Practice appears to his Conscience in its true and frightful Shape ; the Fire that hath animated him against his Brethren, now flashes in his Soul, and discovers its infernal Source ; now he dreads to be made an Example of the same Vengeance among Devils, with which he hath pursued his  
 Fellow

Fellow Mortals; he groans out his last ESSAY  
Breath in bitter Agonies; cries to the God VII.  
of Love for Mercy upon his departing Spirit; ~~~~~  
and expires almost without Hope. He is  
gone. But we leave his Soul to the Com-  
passions of a God who can better pardon  
his mighty Errors, than he would forgive  
others in their little Mistakes.

Thus dreadfully hath this Vice of Uncha-  
ritableness prevailed against the Honour of  
Christianity, and the Peace of Mankind.  
Thus sacrilegiously hath it taken away one  
of the brightest Marks of the best Religion,  
and that is Love. It hath defaced the Beau-  
ty of our Holy Profession, scandalized the  
sacred Name that we bear, made a Slaugh-  
ter-house of the Church of *Christ*, and de-  
ceived the Souls of Men to their own eter-  
nal Ruin.

Just as I had finish'd this Essay, *Pbarisai-  
no* happened to come into my Study, and  
taking up the first Leaf, read the Title, and  
was persuaded this Discourse must be writ-  
ten against himself.

“ No (said I) there is not any Man alive  
“ personally intended in these Papers, but  
“ if you please to peruse them, and shall  
“ apply the Characters to yourself, I hope  
“ you will confess Divine Providence has  
“ led you into a Conviction of your false  
“ Zeal.” *Pbarisaino* sat him down imme-  
diately, and with a running Eye passed thro’

X

every



ESSAY every Page. And tho' the frequent Wrinkle  
 VII. of his Brow discovered his inward Chagrin

and Disgust, yet he paid me many a Ceremony; and " behold (said he) how Language and Fancy will dress up Zeal like  
 " a Monster to fright Men out of their Fervour of Spirit.

" I have heard, added he, that you have  
 " some Skill in Painting, pray draw me the  
 " Figure of this Uncharitableness in just and  
 " proper Colours; this Monster which you  
 " complain has so narrow'd and disgraced,  
 " and murdered Christianity." I will attempt it, *Phariseino*, if you will furnish me with a Sheet of large Paper, and that of the fairest Kind, to represent the Christian Church in this World. First, I will pare it round, and reduce it to a very small compass; then with much Ink will I stain the Whiteness of it, and deform it with many a Blot; at the next sitting I will stab it thro' rudely with an Iron Pen; and when I put the last Hand to compleat the Likeness, it shall be smear'd over with Blood.

APPEN-

APPENDIX *to the first Edition.*

**I**F the Scandal and Cruelty of an uncharitable Temper have not been described in Characters sufficiently frightful, it must be imputed to a Want of Skill in the Hand that attempted it, for there is no Want of formidable Features in the Vice itself. Perhaps a little and unknown Pen hath not Force enough to wage successful War against this mighty Iniquity; and the Printer, in two or three vacant Pages, permits me to call in the Aid of some great and well known Names: Names who fought against it in their Lives, who being dead, yet speak, and plead heartily that it may be destroyed. They espoused the Cause of Charity with a warm Zeal, being persuaded that it made a considerable Part of our Religion, and that the contrary Humour was destructive to all that is called Christian.

Since this Infection is not confined to one Party of Men, but hath spread itself wide through all Christian Societies among us, I have taken the Liberty in the foregoing Leaves to strike at it wheresoever I found it; and those who hide this Venom in their Heart still, to whatsoever Tribe they be-

Essay long, let them hear the Words of their  
 VII. dead Fathers: Let them blush at their own  
 Folly, and no longer refuse to be healed.

Archbishop Tillotson in his Works in Folio, Page 217, acquaints us that *other Sects were distinguished by little Opinions, or by some external Rites and Observances in Religion; but our Saviour pitches upon that which is the most substantial, the most large and extensive, the most useful and beneficial, the most human, and the most divine Quality of which we are capable, and that is Love.* And P. 126. He declares that *Uncharitableness is as bad an Evidence, either of a true Christian or a true Church, as a Man would wish.* Damning of Men is a very hard Thing, and therefore whenever we do it, the Case must be wonderfully plain. And P. 364, *We should rather be contented to err a little on the favourable and charitable Part, than to be mistaken on the censorious and damning Side.* Our blessed Saviour frames his Parables with a remarkable Bias to the charitable Side, to reprove the Uncharitableness of the Jews, who positively excluded all the rest of Mankind besides themselves, from all Hopes of Salvation. An odious Temper, which to the infinite Scandal of the Christian Name and Profession hath prevailed upon some Christians to a notorious Degree.

Dr. Owen in his Discourse of the Person of Christ, P. 222, saith, *One Christian who*  
 is



is meek, humble, kind, patient and useful ESSAY  
 unto all, that condescends to the Ignorance, VII.  
 Weaknesses, and Infirmities of others, that  
 passes by Provocations, Injuries and Contempt  
 with Patience and with Silence, (unless where  
 the Glory and Truth of God call for a just  
 Vindication) that pitieth all Sorts of Men in  
 their Failings and Miscarriages, who is free  
 from Jealousies and evil Surmises, that loveth  
 what is good in all Men; and all Men, even  
 wherein they are not good, nor do good, doth  
 more express the Virtues and Excellencies of  
 Christ, than Thousands can do with the most  
 magnificent Works of Piety or Charity (i. e.  
 Liberality) where this Frame is wanting in  
 them. For Men to pretend to follow the Ex-  
 ample of Christ, and in the mean time to be  
 proud, wrathful, envious, bitterly zealous,  
 calling for Fire from Heaven to destroy Men,  
 or fetching it themselves from Hell, is to  
 cry, Hail unto him, and to crucify him afresh  
 unto their Power.

Mr. Baxter in his Christian Directory,  
 Part 1. p. 40 writes thus: Surely if the very  
 Life of Godliness lay not much in Unity and  
 Love, we should never have had such Words  
 spoken of it as you find in Scripture. Love  
 is to the Soul as our natural Heat is to the  
 Body; whatever destroys it, destroys Life; and  
 therefore cannot be for our Good. Be certain,  
 that Opinion, Course or Motion tends to Death  
 that tends to abate your Love to your Brethren,

ESSAY much more, which under Pretence of Zeal,  
 VII. provoketh you to hate and hurt them. And  
 a little after, To limit all the Church to your  
 Party, and deny all or any of the rest to be  
 Christians and Parts of the universal Church,  
 is Schism by a dangerous Breach of Charity.  
 And P. 41. he asserts it a most dangerous  
 thing to a young Convert to be ensnared in a  
 Sect: It will, before you are aware, possess you  
 with a jealousish sinful Zeal for the Opinions  
 and Interest of that Sect. It will  
 make you bold in bitter Invectives and Censures  
 against those that differ from them. It will corrupt  
 your Church-Communion, and fill your very Prayers  
 with Partiality and human Passions: It will secretly  
 bring Malice under the Name of Zeal into your  
 Minds and Words: In a Word, it is a secret but  
 deadly Enemy to Christian Love and Peace. Let  
 them that are wiser and more Orthodox and  
 godly than others, shew it as the Holy Ghost  
 directs them, Jam. iii. 13, &c.

The Baptists in their Appendix to their  
 Confession of Faith, 1677, say, The Discharge  
 of our own Consciences, in point of Baptism,  
 doth not any Ways disoblige or alienate our  
 Affections or Conversation from any others  
 that fear the Lord; but that we may and do  
 (as we have Opportunity) participate of the  
 Labours of those whom God hath endued with  
 Abilities above ourselves, and qualified and  
 called to the Ministry of the Word; earnestly

estly desiring to approve ourselves to be such **ESSAY**  
 as follow after Peace with Holiness; and **VII**  
 therefore we always keep that blessed Ireni-  
 cum or healing Word of the Apostle before  
 our Eyes, Phil. iii. 15, 16. And at the End  
 of the Appendix they declare, that in as  
 much as these things (viz.) Modes of Bap-  
 tism, &c. are not of the Essence of Christi-  
 anity, but that we agree in the Fundamen-  
 tal Doctrines thereof, we do apprehend there  
 is sufficient Ground to lay aside all Bitterness  
 and Prejudice, and in the Spirit of Love  
 and Meekness to embrace and own each other  
 therein; leaving each other at Liberty to  
 perform such other Services (wherein we can-  
 not concur) apart unto God, according to  
 the best of our Understanding.



## ESSAY VIII.

*Of the Difficulties in Scripture, and  
the Different Opinions of Christi-  
ans in things less necessary.*

## S E C T. I.

*A Short Account of these Difficulties.*

Concerning the Doctrines and Duties which peculiarly belong to the New Testament, I have generally concluded this to be a good Rule of Judgment, that according to the Degree of their Importance or Necessity to Salvation, such is commonly the Degree of their Evidence; and the Frequency of their Repetition is, for the most part, proportionable to their Usefulness. Those great Truths of our Religion, and those Practices of Christianity, without which we can't be saved, are described in the Word of God in large and fair Characters, so that *he who runs may read them*. These *Visions* and Revelations of the Mind and Will of God our Sovereign, *are written and made plain upon the Tables* of the

Evangelists,

Evangelists, or of the Apostles, *Hab. ii. 2.* ESSAY they are not mentioned once and briefly, VIII. but many Pages explain and repeat them; they stand in a divine and convincing Light, and may easily be understood by those who with a humble and teachable Spirit, inquire what they must believe and do, in order to please God.

This Remark is much confirmed by that Promise which assures us that it should be so in Gospel-times. *The High-way to Heaven is so plain, that the way-faring Men, or Strangers, though they be Fools in Understanding, shall not err therein, Isai. xxxv. 8.* A Man that labours in his daily Calling, in the City or the Field, or a Servant in the lowest Rank of Life, may, with due Application in their vacant Moments, be acquainted with the necessary Truths and Duties of our Religion; besides that the Spirit of God is promised to sincere and diligent Seekers, to faithful and humble Inquirers, and shall be bestowed sufficiently to inform them of the sure way to eternal Life, *Prov. ii. 1. 6. If thou criest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding, if thou seekest her as Silver, and searchest for her as for hid Treasures, then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God. Luke xi. 13. Your heavenly Father shall give the holy Spirit to them that ask him. And the Spirit*

ESSAY Spirit is *sent to guide the Faithful into all*  
 VIII. *Truth*, John xvi. 13.

~ The Wisdom, the Equity and the Goodness of God seem all to concur in fixing Matters of necessary Belief and Practice in this Situation, *i. e.* That they should be often and plainly exprest. If there be any particular Doctrine or Duty which I find written but in one single Text of Scripture, or exprest but darkly, I should reasonably conclude the Great God never designed that Doctrine, or that Duty to be of very great Importance in the Christian Life: For a dark Expression is much more easily mistaken, as to the true Sense of it; and a single Text is more liable to be *miscopied*, or *dropt* by a Transcriber, or be *misconstrued* by a Translator, or *overseen and neglected* by a common Reader or Hearer; and the Great God would not put Matters of high Importance on so doubtful and dangerous a Foot, and leave Things necessary at such Uncertainties, lest honest and humble *Enquirers* should, after all their Pains, mistake their Way to Heaven.

A sudden Thought of the *Form and Order of Baptism*, prescribed to us, *Matth. xxviii. 18.* made me at first suspect, that there must be one Exception made to this Rule, about the frequent Repetition of any Doctrine or Duty necessary to Salvation; but upon a further Consideration and Review of Things  
 it



it appears evident to me now, that tho' this *ESSAY* Appointment of the *Form of Baptism* was *VIII.* prescribed to be done in the Name of the

*Holy Spirit*, as well as of the *Father and the Son*, yet it was by no means necessary to the Salvation of any Man, and therefore there was no necessity of having it often repeated. Let us consider

ist, That the Appointment of it is but once expressed, and that by one holy Writer, and there is never an actual Example or Instance of this compleat Form of Baptism practised in any place of Scripture. Observe that remarkable Text, *Acts xix. 2.* where St. Paul inquired of the young Converts that were baptised at *Ephesus*, *Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? and they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.* He then inquired, unto what were ye baptised? and they said, *Unto John's Baptism*; and Paul had told them that John taught them, that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, in Christ Jesus: when they heard this, they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Whether they were baptised in the Name of the *holy Spirit*, or no, is not actually expressed, which is something strange, when that was the chief Point of Enquiry concerning their Baptism into the Holy Ghost.

Here

ESSAY


VIII. Here also it may be observed, that those who were here baptised, *Acts* xix. 5, 6. immediately received the Holy Ghost; whence it may be very probably inferred, that some Persons were baptised with the Holy Ghost itself, who were not actually baptised into the Name of the Holy Ghost.

Consider 2dly, When the Business of Baptism is mentioned in several Places in the Epistles, it is generally declared that Baptism was performed in the Name of the Lord Jesus, *Rom.* vi. 3. so many of you as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his Death, *Gal.* iii. 27. As many of you as have been baptised into Christ, *1 Cor.* xii. 13. By one Spirit we are baptised into one Body, i. e. Christ as in the foregoing Verse, but I can find no mention of the Disciples being baptised into the Holy Ghost.

3dly, Though I am ready to believe from many Expressions in the Primitive History of the Church, that the Baptisers did usually keep to this Form of Words, *I baptise thee in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, yet it is evident from a long Account which Grotius gives us upon this Text, *Matt.* xxviii. 19. that they used divers Forms, that is, they sometimes expressed the Father by a Periphrasis, *The God of all, or the God of the whole, the God and Father of the whole*, sometimes the Son was expressed by the Word,

*Of the Difficulties in Scripture.*

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*Word, or the only begotten Son of God:* ESSAY  
Sometimes *the Holy Ghost* was expressed by VIII.  
*the Spirit who inspired the Prophets.* 

I might add, that upon their Profession of the Christian Religion, sometimes it is called the Profession of the *Remission of Sins*, or the *Catholic Church*, or *Everlasting Life*, but they never made a Scruple of their being rightly baptised into Salvation upon any of these Accounts; and I am persuaded that had the Apostles themselves, or the primitive Christians, thought it necessary to Salvation, the Form of Baptism would have been more express in the History of it, and been more particularly repeated.

I think therefore the *Rule* may stand good still, that where a Doctrine or a Duty is mentioned but in one single Place of the Scripture, it cannot be of absolute Necessity to Salvation. I hope the Reader will forgive this long Digression, and then proceed.

On the other hand, where particular Truths or Duties are often repeated in Scripture, and very plainly expressed in several Places, it is hardly possible that they should be subject to these Inconveniencies. It is not to be supposed that the Transcribers of the New Testament should make the same Mistake in every Place, where these Propositions are mentioned; that they should drop them out of every Chapter; that the  
Translator



ESSAY Translator should misconstrue them in every  
VIII. Text; or that their Misconstruction should

always seem to make good Sense in every Context where they stand; or finally that the Hearer or Reader should always overlook them when they are found in so many passages, and so often occur to his Ear or Eye.

But it is very apparent, and all Men must acknowledge that Matters of less Moment, and things not necessary, are not mentioned so often: And when they are mentioned, the Scripture sometimes gives no Determination or positive Injunctions about them; nor do the Apostles determine the smaller Controversies with that plain, exact and positive Method of Speech, which you find them use in the most substantial Truths and Duties. If we read the 14th Chap. to the *Romans*, it must convince us of this Assertion. St. Paul does not there decide the little Controversies about Observations of Meats and Days, but seems to leave them to Charity. Nor are the lesser Points of Christianity half so often mentioned, or urged with half so much Vehemence, as the grand Duties of Faith and Love, Repentance and Holiness. In matters of lower Concernment among the Formalities and Modes of Religion, or even in some higher Articles, whose Circumstances and logical Relations are not necessary to Salvation, the Scripture has its *δυσνοητα* et *ferè αλυτα*, as Divines call them, i. e. almost

most insolvable Difficulties and Things, very hard to be understood by Men in this State, at least by common Readers. ESSAY VIII.

Sometimes the Matter is so sublime, so unlike all mortal Affairs, and so divinely superior to every thing here below, that perhaps 'twas not possible to describe it fully and plainly in human Words: And the more enlightned the Writer or Speaker was, the deeper and more inexpressible might some of the Truths be which he reveals. Our Saviour has made some such Discoveries at the latter end of his Prayer in the 17th of St. *John's* Gospel. Such are the Doctrines of the *Union or Oneness of Christ with God his Father*, and the *Oneness or Union of the Saints with God and Christ*. Some things are constrained to be expressed in a human way less suitable to their own Dignity, and yet even then they are not perfectly easy to be understood, for earthly Metaphors will not convey to our Thoughts a full Idea of things divine and heavenly. When *Christ* had been teaching *Nicodemus* the Doctrine of Regeneration, *John* iii. 12. he adds, *If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?* The Apostle *Paul*, the most enlightned of all mere Men, saw and heard some things among his Visions and Revelations, that were *unutterable*, 2 *Cor.* xii. And some things which he has published

ESSAY published for the Use of the Church, according to the Wisdom given to him, are  
 VIII. *hard to be understood*, as St. Peter himself assures us, 2 Peter iii. 16.

Again, I might take Notice that in Matters which are *Prophetical*, both in the Old Testament and in the New, there are many dark Expressions, many Parables and hard Figures of Speech, which are made use of to express and convey some general and indistinct Ideas of future Events, which were not fit to be more fully revealed in that Day, and which only the Accomplishment was designed to explain to future Days or Ages. *When these things are come to pass, then shall ye know that I have foretold them*, John xiii. 19. and xiv. 29. and xvi. 4.

The Spirit of God, for wise Ends, hath expressed some Things in particular Seasons, whether Doctrinal or Prophetical, in obscure Phrases, capable of a double Interpretation. Other things are very briefly hinted, and the holy Writer doth but just glance at them in passing, and does not dwell upon them long enough to explain them, that being not his present chief Design.

Some Words are so ambiguous and of various Meaning in the same Chapter, that it is not easy to determine their precise Sense in each Verse; and these Words also transferr'd into our Language may not have the same different Meanings as the Original,  
 I and



and perhaps too, may be determined to the wrong Sense by the Translators; but the Vulgar can read only their own Language, and their Judgments are determined by the Translators Opinion. The various Meanings put on the Words Νόμος the Law, ἐκκλησία the Church, χειροτονέω to ordain, ἐπίσκοπος a Bishop or Overseer, &c. sufficiently prove this.

Besides, the Sense of many a Scripture depends not merely on the literal Construction of the Words, but on the Knowledge of the Context, and on the Consideration of the Scope and Design of the Writer, and perhaps the deeper Design of the Spirit of God that inspired him: It depends on the Character of the Person that writes, and on the Character and Condition of the Persons to whom he writes, into what Errors or evil Practices they were fallen, at what Times, and under what Circumstances these Things fell out: All which it is impossible every Mechanic should know, and but few Scholars are well acquainted with: These Difficulties in Scripture occasion different Opinions among the Readers; and because each would impose his Sense upon all the rest of Christians, a thousand quarrelling *Folios* have sprung.

There is another Difficulty and Shade of Darknes which falls upon many Texts of Scripture, and particularly in the New

ESSAY Testament, from the extraordinary Actions  
 VIII. and Modes of Action in the primitive and  
 inspired Times. 'Tis certain that some  
 things recorded in the Acts of the Apostles,  
 and occasionally spoken of in the Epistles,  
 refer only to the extraordinary and inspired  
 Transactions of those miraculous Times,  
 and cannot be imitated by us: Such are the  
 Communication of Gifts by the Imposition  
 of Hands, the healing the Sick by anoint-  
 ing with Oil, the multitude of useful Speak-  
 ers in one Assembly, the talking various  
 Languages in publick Worship if an Inter-  
 preter were present, &c. It is as certain also,  
 that some things are recorded in some of  
 those Scriptures, as Patterns and Directions  
 for our Imitation in all Ages. Such are the  
 Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Sup-  
 per, the Choice of Deacons, the Ordina-  
 tion of Overseers or Bishops, the Practice  
 of occasional Communion, &c. But there  
 are some *Circumstances* relating to these Ac-  
 tions, concerning which it is hard to deter-  
 mine how far they belong to the extraor-  
 dinary Affairs of that Day, and how far  
 they are Rules for our Conduct in ordinary  
 Cases.

Now from all these Differences have a-  
 risen many laborious and angry Volumes of  
 Noise and Wrangle about the Mint, the  
 Annise, and the Cummin, about the Dress  
 and the Fringes of Religion, which have  
 vex'd

vex'd the learned World, and disquieted and divided the Church of *Christ*. ESSAY  
VIII.

Notwithstanding all these Difficulties in Scripture, and the divided Sentiments of Men about them; yet there is no room for the *Popish* Doctrine of the *Insufficiency of the Holy Scriptures*; no need of any living Judge of Controversies, or a Seat of Infalibility on Earth; for the grand Doctrines and Duties which are necessary to Salvation, such as Repentance toward God, Faith in the Lord *Jesus Christ*, as a Prophet, a High-priest and a King, the Necessity of universal Holiness, Pardon of Sin thro' the Blood of *Christ*, the Resurrection of the Dead, and eternal Rewards and Punishments in the World to come; all these, I say, are written down in Scripture, in as plain and express a manner as the Nature and Importance of them required; and about these things Persons of a sober, humble and honest Mind cannot well mistake, if they are diligent in their Enquiry, and *seek Wisdom of that God who gives liberally, and upbraids us not with our own Folly*.

Not only are all Matters necessary to Salvation written plain enough for every Reader, but we have also, as I hinted before, the Promise of the Assistance of the Holy Spirit to teach us to understand all such Revelations, that sincere and diligent Men may not be suffered to fall into such a Mistake as to



ESSAY fail of Acceptance with God. Nay, further,  
 VIII. we have good Encouragement to hope, that  
 even in some things on which Salvation doth  
 not necessarily depend, but are only design-  
 ed to promote the farther Sanctification and  
 Comfort, Peace and Hope of the Church,  
 the Spirit of God will often assist the up-  
 right and humble Seeker, yet still there  
 will remain Difficulties enough to exercise  
 inquisitive Souls, for I find no certain Pro-  
 mise, that God will always satisfy every  
 sincere Inquirer in the full Meaning of all  
 difficult Texts.

“ I glorify thee, O my God, that thou  
 “ hast not confin’d the Knowledge of thy-  
 “ self to the wise and the learned World,  
 “ but hast written down the Way of Salva-  
 “ tion so plain, that a Child may read and  
 “ attain it. Let the Scribes and Doctors  
 “ and Critics of the Age wrangle about  
 “ the Pins of the Tabernacle, and the Seats  
 “ in the Synagogue, let them contend, even  
 “ to Blood, about the *Ofs*, the *Ands*, and  
 “ the *Moreovers* of the Bible, my Soul  
 “ shall dwell in Peace, and rest on these  
 “ Pillars of Safety, even the great and evi-  
 “ dent Doctrines of the Christian Faith. *I*  
 “ *thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and*  
 “ *Earth, that thou hast revealed thy self*  
 “ *and thy Son unto Babes*, and hast not  
 “ made it a Matter of Wit and Criticism  
 “ to be a Christian. *The Foolish and the*  
 “ *Base,*

“ *Base, and the weak Things of this World* ESSAY  
 “ *are chosen to Salvation, and they under- VIII.*  
 “ *stand, and believe, and practise all the ne-*  
 “ *cessary Articles, while they may differ*  
 “ *from each other in some lesser Forms of*  
 “ *Worship and Discipline, and are not able*  
 “ *to maintain an Argument on either*  
 “ *Side.*”

What is here asserted concerning the *Sub-  
 stance* of some of the *less necessary* Articles of  
 our Religion (*viz.*) that they are somewhat  
 obscurely expressed in Scripture; the same  
 may be apply'd also to the *circumstantial* To-  
 picks, to the *Appendices*, and the *Logical*  
*Relations* even of the *greatest and most ne-  
 cessary* Points of Christianity, as I hinted  
 before. Tho' the Practice of Repentance,  
 and the Promises of Pardon; tho' Justifica-  
 tion by Faith, and the Death of *Christ* as a  
 Ransom for Sinners, are so often and so plain-  
 ly affirmed, yet it is not affirmed so often,  
 nor so plain in Scripture; what *Logical Re-  
 lation* Faith bears to our Justification; whe-  
 ther it is a *Condition* as some make it, or a  
*receiving Instrument* as others suppose: Nor  
 is it so indisputably and so evidently written  
 in the Word of God, whether *Christ* died as  
 a *conditional Atonement for all Sin*, and a  
 Purchaser of Salvation in general for all  
 that are willing to accept it, or whether as  
 a *strict Representative* only of the Elect, and

ESSAY to procure neither absolute nor conditional  
VIII. Pardon for any Sins but theirs.

~~~~~ 'Tis evident beyond all doubt, that where the Gospel comes, *he that believes shall be saved*: But whether Faith saves us as it is a mere Dependance on divine Grace, or on the Priesthood of *Christ*, or whether it saves us rather as a hearty Belief of the Gospel and the Grace of it, even such a Belief as comes to be the Spring of our Repentance and our Holiness, this is not so exceeding evident as to leave no room for Controversy.

It is abundantly revealed in Holy Scripture, that without Repentance of our Sins we can never be saved, nor shall any of our Iniquities be forgiven without a sincere Conversion to God; but to declare with utmost Exactness and full Assurance what *Logical Relation* our Repentance bears to our Pardon, Scripture hath not taught us quite so fully, nor so clearly described it.

It is sufficiently plain to every Reader of the Bible, that Holiness of Heart and Life is of absolute Necessity to our Entrance into Heaven, for *without Holiness no Man can see God*: But how far, and in what precise Sense this Holiness and Obedience to the Commands of God can give a *Right to enter into the Gates of the City* is something harder to determine; or what is that sort of Right or Title which our own sincere Obedience



bedience gives us to the immediate Possession of Blessedness, tho' we are fully assured from several Places in the Word of God, it is very different from the Right which we obtain by the Obedience and Sufferings of *Christ*.

In some Places the sacred Writer seems to mention one Doctrine, while he is pursuing some one Subject with Warmth and Zeal; in other Places of Scripture the contrary seems to be signified or hinted; now both these in the literal Sense, and without Limitation, cannot be true: And which of these two Texts must be reduced to the other, by certain Distinctions and Limitations in order to a Reconciliation, is not so easy always to determine: For in some Instances it may happen, that the Proposition which is but implied in one Text, is nearer the Truth than another Proposition which seems to be expressed in another Place; which can only be decided by a due Survey of the Context, and the different Designs of the Writer, and a Comparison of other Scriptures.

Therefore if we will dispute about these solemn Subjects, let our warmest Zeal and our sharpest Weapons be engaged against those Adversaries of the Gospel, who attempt to ruin the Foundations of it; let us contend most earnestly for the Defence of what God most obviously and incontestably

ESSAY reveals; but our coolest Debates, our Candor and Charity, rather than Fierceness, should be employ'd about the Points of more dubious Discovery: At best we should maintain great Moderation so long, till we find the lesser Errors spreading like a secret Gangrene; and drawing along with them dismal Consequences, till they are observed to infect the more substantial parts of Godliness, and endanger the Vitals and very Essence of Christianity.

If our Reverend Fathers and Brethren have shewn a fiery Zeal about these lesser Errors, I would persuade myself their chief Motive was a Suspicion of Danger and Ruin to the Gospel itself, in the Liberty, in the Purity, and in the Glory of it, if they should have connived at these lesser Mistakes, or treated them with a cold Indifference: And 'tis possible that sometimes they might have Reason for their Suspicion and their Zeal, though it may be confessed they were but Men, and their Fervor might sometimes exceed due Bounds.

But, in general, as to these meaner Points, *Moderation is our Duty: Where to we have attained, let us walk by the same Rule, and if any be otherwise minded, God in his most proper Season will reveal it also to them, Phil. iii. 15, 16.* 'Tis as if the blessed Apostle had said, that *those who trust only in Christ and his Righteousness, as the ground*  
of

of their Acceptance before God, shall be joyfully received to join their right Hand of Fellowship with mine; and if they do but pursue Holiness sincerely from the plainer Motives of Christianity, though they are not well acquainted with those most noble Principles of it (*viz.*) Communion with a suffering, dying and rising Saviour as a Representative, Pledge and Pattern of spiritual dying to Sin, and Resurrection into Holiness, which are contained in v. 10. yet I will not disturb them about it, but hope God will discover it to them in his Time.

Yet further, as the great Doctrines of Christianity and the necessary Duties of it, are very much distinguished from the less necessary Points, and the Circumstantials of those Duties, by their greater Evidence and Clearness of Revelation; so the more substantial Parts of the Worship appointed in the Gospel, may be distinguished from the less Important Modes and Circumstances. Solemn Prayer unto God, preaching of the Word, Administration of the Ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and a due Attendance thereon, are plainly and certainly required of us that assume the Name of Christians in our sacred Assemblies. But whether we may borrow Assistance from composed Forms in preaching, praying and other Administrations; or whether we must renounce all Use of Forms, Books and

Notes

ESSAY

VIII.



ESSAY Notes to aid our Invention, Memory and  
 VIII. Expression in Prayers and Sermons, are mere  
 ~~~~~ accidental Matters, and not written in Scrip-  
 ture with so express a Pen. So whether  
 the Person baptised must be sprinkled or  
 immerfed, and whether the Communicants  
 at the Lord's Table must sit, or lean, stand,  
 or kneel, are less-essential Considerations,  
 and have been the Subjects of dubious In-  
 quiry.

Again, in the Constitution, Order and  
 Government of a Church, the same Distinc-  
 tions may be made also. That Persons pro-  
 fessing the Name of *Christ* should agree to  
 walk and worship together at stated Seasons  
 in the Fellowship of the Gospel, seems to  
 be a Demand of the Law of Nature, and  
 sufficiently confirmed by many Directions  
 or Examples in positive Expressions of Scrip-  
 ture too; That every such Congregation of  
 faithful People, or voluntary Society of  
 Christians, is a Church of *Christ*; That they  
 ought to seclude or put away from their  
 Number, the grossly ignorant, the scanda-  
 lous and the prophane, and to *withdraw*  
*from those that walk disorderly*; That there  
 should be Persons appointed to minister to  
 them in holy things, and that the Society  
 should honour and maintain them; All  
 these seem to be plain and undoubted Duty.

But whether this Society may receive and  
 exclude Members without or against the  
 Consent

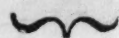
Consent of their Pastor; Whether there must be any Elders in a Church distinct from and inferior to the Pastor or Bishop; Whether the Minister needs the Imposition of the Hands of several Presbyters, or the superior episcopal Consecration; or whether he be sufficiently ordained by the Choice of the Society, his solemn Acceptance, and his own and their devoting him to God in that Office by Fasting and Prayer; these things are not quite so evident in the Writings of the New-Testament. And while we are required to have no Fellowship with the openly Wicked, though they are pretended Professors of Religion, yet we are commanded to *receive the Weak in the Faith*, and to hold Communion with them in Common Christianity, though we may all differ in *doubtful Disputations*.

S E C T. II.

*An Insurrection of contending Christians.*

I am easily aware that the Men of Heat and Party, will lift up their Hands in Wonder, when they read this Catalogue and Distinction of the Affairs of Christianity. I see them already kindling into Rage against me; they compass my Tent and proclaim War. And upon a Review of their Numbers, their Insurrection and their Zeal, I cannot find an Advocate wanting for any one

ESSAY Sect or Party, among the common Professors of the Religion of *Christ* in *England*.

VIII.  I see there *Merges* and his Neighbour *Aspergio*; I find *Sedentius* and *Genicola* both there; *Piscopion*, *Classicus* and *Antipas* are come thither also. Each of them a *Prince of their Tribe*, and either a *Head* or a *very forward Member of the Family of their Fathers*. Just so the Children of *Israel* began to denounce War against their Brethren *Gad* and *Reuben*, when they built an Altar of Witness to maintain their Communion with the rest of their Tribes, while they were *Dissenters* only in point of Habitation, and dwelt beyond *Jordan*: These Party-Men are full of Faith and Certainty in every Opinion; they embrace none as Brethren in *Christ* who do not wear their Garb and Livery, and talk not exactly in their Language and Phrases, nor will they hold Communion with those that dissent from them in the least Punctilio's of the Form or Worship of Christians. "If Men depart from the Truth, say they, they are in the Way of Error; and 'tis all one whether they depart little or much, since they have forsaken the Truth we ought to forsake them."

These warm Zealots are not used to admit of any Doubt in the smallest Circumstantials of Religion, and because they have learnt of their Teachers to affirm all their



Tenets with equal Confidence, they believe ESSAY that the Scripture reveals them all with equal VIII. Evidence. A Metaphor smiling upon their Practice, is an exprefs Command. They can read their indispensable Duty in a fingle and dubious Example. A remote Conclusion of their own drawing, at the End of a long Chain of Confequences, gives them refiftlefs Conviction, and appears in their Eye as bright, though diftant, as the Morning-Star. A Circumftance or two of matter of Fact determines their Judgment unchangeably, for or againft an Opinion, which at moft is but feebly favoured by thofe very Circumftances; a little Criticifm on a fingle *Greek* Word in fome fingle Text of Scripture, becomes a firm Foundation for their Faith: They force fome Text or other to prove every thing which they fay, and when they have impofed their Senfe on the Words of the holy Writers, they are fure the Evangelifts and the Apoftles are of their Mind. Each of them have pickt up fome Scraps of the Arguments of their Party, and they fancy themfelves well equiped and furnifhed for the Defence of the Truth.

*Merges*, a very honeft Man in the main, is newly come out of the Water, and glows all over with Zeal and Affurance, that there can be no Baptifm without plunging: He makes a mere Jeft of *Baby-Sprinkling*, and declares that if we are not covered with  
Water,

ESSAY Water, we are not *buried with Christ*: No  
 VIII. honest Man, says he, could ever doubt that  
 { *John's Disciples were immerst at Enon, for*  
*the Scriptures say, there was much Water*  
*there, John iii. 23.*

*Aspergio*, a bold Talker, is as confident  
 that sprinkling, or pouring Water on the  
 Head, is a true Method of Baptism, and is  
 ready to say severe things against the Prac-  
 tice of Immersion, as if it were not only  
 needless, but, as they are ready to call it,  
 foolish and sinful.

'Tis plain, saith he, in the Word of God,  
 that the Apostles *were baptised with the Spi-*  
*rit, which can never mean that they were*  
*dipt or plunged into the Spirit, but only that*  
*the Spirit was poured out upon them*: And  
 when the *Israelites were baptised into Moses*,  
 'tis plain they were only sprinkled *with the*  
*Cloud and the Sea*, Matt. iii. 11. compared  
 with *Acts ii. 3, 17.* and *1 Cor. x. 2.* and  
 therefore, says he, I wonder that any Man  
 should be so weak as to give himself the  
 trouble of Dipping when he has such Texts  
 as these to prove Sprinkling.

*Sedentius*, a weak and warm Dissenter, is  
 just come from St. Paul's Cathedral: Being  
 urged by great Curiosity, with much ado  
 he obtained Leave of his Conscience to go  
 thither and see Men receive the Lord's Sup-  
 per kneeling: As he returns he is almost  
 ready to pronounce Damnation against the  
 Organs

Organs and Singing-Men, for they are all, ESSAY  
 faith he, the Limbs of *Antichrist*: He VIII.  
 whispers Damnation against these Idolaters  
 that bow before a Piece of Bread; for they  
 look as though they worshipped the Host,  
 and belonged to *Rome*. He is very positive  
 that sitting is a Posture of absolute Necessity  
 in that Ordinance, for *Jesus* and his Disciples  
*did sit and eat*, Mark xiv. 8. 1 Cor. xi. 20.  
 and since it is called the *Supper of the Lord*,  
 we must sit down while we partake of it,  
 for every Child knows that Men are never  
 wont to kneel at Supper.

On the other hand, *Genicola* hates the  
*Presbyterians* for their scandalous Irreve-  
 rence at the Sacrament: "What, faith he,  
 " dare any Man use so clownish and so rude  
 " a Gesture as sitting, when he receives  
 " the Seal of the Pardon of his Sins, and  
 " the Emblems of the Body and Blood of  
 " *Christ*?" and he forbids all such Wor-  
 shippers from his Communion with this  
 Sentence, *Procul, O procul este, profani*; i. e.  
*hence ye profane Creatures*, though he can  
 hardly pretend to bring one Text of Scrip-  
 ture for his own Practice: He is sure also  
 that the Surplice, a Sign or Token of Pu-  
 rity, and as our Reformers teach, ought to  
 be worn at Prayer, for we must lift up  
 Hands of Purity and Innocence when we  
 come before God; and he finds the long  
 white Garment in these Words, *Let all*  
*things*



ESSAY *things be done decently and in order*, 1 Cor.

VIII. xiv. 40.

~~~~~ To me, saith *Piscopion*, 'tis as clear as the Light, that no Man can be a Minister of *Christ* unless the Hands of a superior Man, even a *Diocesan* Bishop, have been upon his Head; and all the Preachings and Ministrings of such a presumptuous Wretch, who was not thus ordained, are but vain Babblings, empty Trifles, and impudent Usurpations in the Name of the Lord: For thus saith the Common Prayer Book, which was made by Saints and Martyrs, *It is evident unto all Men, diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.* Thus he proceeds triumphant where the Civil Government is on his Side, and will yield to no Man in Argument or Dispute.

*Classicus* arises in warm Opposition to Prelacy, and asserts it an indisputable Truth, that no Minister of *Christ* is superior to another: " I read, saith he, in my Bible, no  
 " Distinction between Bishops and Presby-  
 " ters; they are the same Officers in Scrip-  
 " ture: And the Power of Synods is so  
 " plainly instituted at the Council at *Jeru-*  
 " *salem*, *Acts* xv. that I am amazed this  
 " should be esteemed a matter of Doubt or  
 " Difficulty; and I am well assured of this,  
 because

“ because *Timothy* had the Hands of the  
 “ Presbytery laid upon him, 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. ESSAY VIII.  
 “ there is no Man above or below a Pres-  
 “ byter has any thing to do in ordaining  
 “ Ministers since the Apostles are dead.

*Antipas* grows impatient at these bold  
 Assertions, and asserts with as much Bold-  
 ness, that the Power of ordaining all Sorts  
 of Officers in the Church belongs properly  
 to the Brethren of a single Congregation,  
 and none besides have any Authority to  
 meddle with it, since the Race of inspired  
 Men are dead and gone: The Brethren  
 have all the Power in their Hands, and 'tis  
 the Church or Congregation alone that has  
 any Manner of Right to chuse and approve  
 and establish its own Pastors, Elders, Over-  
 seers and Deacons: For is it not said, *Acts*  
 vi. 3. *Look you out among you seven Men, &c.*  
 And if this be done at the Choice of *Dea-*  
*cons*, why not of *Elders* too? The Learned  
 say, that the Word in *Greek*, which is used  
 for ordaining of Elders, signifies the Choice  
 or *lifting up the Hands of the Brethren to*  
*vote for them* \*. Whatsoever Particulars  
 are disputed in Church Government, the  
 Power of the People must be ever acknow-  
 ledged and received as a fundamental and  
 immoveable Truth.

Among all these Combatants there is not  
 one but is so positive in his own Sentiments,

\* *Χειροτονία.*

ESSAY that one would think they had received  
 VIII. all their Opinions by Inspiration, or that  
 ~~~~~ *Christ* and his Apostles had been precisely of  
 their Party, and had written their Opinions  
 down in exprefs Letters and Syllables. And  
 not only are they so assured of the Truth of  
 their Tenets, but the vast Importance of them  
 too : And each of them grows angry that his  
 own particular Opinion should be reckoned  
 among the less-evident or the less-important  
 Points of Religion : Their Fury boils high,  
 and their mistaken Zeal and warm Ferment  
 of their Passion swells every Punctilio to a  
 Mountain, and makes every Particle of their  
 Opinions fundamental : They don't observe  
 how their swift Career and Violence carries  
 each of them besides or beyond their Text,  
 and thus they are sometimes hurried on be-  
 side the Goal of Truth, and I am persuaded  
 their Assurance always runs too fast for their  
 Evidence, and reaches far beyond it.

They commend and practise *Vebemence*  
 as a Virtue, and so far forget their Bible as  
 to believe all *Moderation* to be a mere Spi-  
 rit of Indifference, and unworthy of a good  
 Christian. They all maintain opposite No-  
 tions, yet by their Temper and Conduct  
 they all seem to approve each other's Zeal  
 for his own Party, and with one Consent  
 they vote me a mere Latitudinarian, a luke-  
 warm Professor, a Citizen of *Laodicea*, who  
 has not a Spark of Zeal for the Gospel of  
*Christ,*



*Christ, the Worship or the Discipline of his Church.* ESSAY  
VIII.

My dear zealous Friends, be calm a little, and let me speak before I'm condemned. I do not deny many of these Things which I call *less-important* to be some Way discovered in the New Testament, tho' not in so express and plain Language as you suppose. The chief Concerns of the Christian Church are so far prescribed by positive Rules, by Examples or just Inferences, that a serious Reader, who is attentive and unbiassed, and who will exercise his reasoning Powers, may find sufficient Notices of all necessary Truth and Duty: According to my Measure of Light I humbly hope I have found it, and thereby regulate my Practice.

But still it must be granted, that Things less necessary are not so plainly described as the bigger and more substantial Parts of Religion, nor graven in Characters so large and obvious that every one must needs discern them. *Christ Jesus hath been as faithful in his House as Moses was*, and has delineated the Form, Pattern and Order of it, so far as infinite Wisdom thought necessary to carry on the grand Designs of Grace and the Gospel: But some of the lesser Pins in this spiritual Tabernacle are not so graphically decyphered, as that every Child may tell whether they must be round or square. There is nothing of so much Weight de-

ESSAY pends upon them, and therefore there was  
 VIII. no need for them to be so expressly described  
 under the New Testament, wherein *bodily Exercise profits little*, but Worship and Religion consist more in what is spiritual and invisible \*.

Upon the whole then, since there are different Degrees of Evidence and Clearness, wherewith some of the Doctrines of Faith, and the Rules of Worship and Order in the New Testament are express, there ought also to be found in us different Degrees of Assent or Assurance, wherewith we should receive these Doctrines or these Rules of Duty: For it is a certain and eternal Rule of *Logic* or *Reason*, that *our Assent to any Proposition ought to be firm or feeble, just in Proportion to the different Degrees of Evidence, whether they be brighter or more obscure.*

Here then is a plain and pretty general Rule given us, whereby we may judge whether any particular Opinion or Practice be more or less important, and consequently whether our Zeal for it should be warmer or cooler, *viz.* Is the Evidence of this Practice, or this Truth in Scripture more bright or cloudy? According to the Light of Evidence, such generally should our Zeal be.

\* See the Essay on the *Reasons why the Worship of Christian Churches is not so particularly prescribed as the Jewish*, which you may find in the Treatise about the *Holiness of Times, Places and Persons.*

Violence and fierce Contention among Christians, especially about Matters of lesser Moment, or of doubtful Dispute, are infinitely scandalous to the Christian Name; and as they tend to ruin and destroy the Churches of *Christ*, so in all Ages they have greatly grieved the Souls of those who love the Interests of Christianity, and wish well to *Sion*. ESSAY  
VIII.

S E C T. III.

*Some Reasons why these Differences are permitted to arise among Christians.*

If it would not offend my Readers, I would here come to an ingenuous Confession, that the different Sentiments and dreadful Quarrels of Christians about some of the lesser Things of Religion, and the dark and dubious Expressions in Scripture, wherein some Parts of our Religion are revealed, have sometimes been a sore Temptation and Sorrow to my Heart, so that I have wish'd these doubtful Disputables had been more clearly determined there. I have been plunged into the Briars of this Perplexity, when I have seen Persons of devout Soul, serious and humble, dissent so widely from each other, both in Opinion and Practice, and that in Matters of some Moment too, and even after long and honest Enquiries into the Meaning of God in his Word.



ESSAY Under these Difficulties I have said in my  
VIII. Heart, " Why did not the God of Wisdom

~ " and of Love express every Article of Be-  
" lief and Duty in Words of plainest Reve-  
" lation and Precept, that we might have  
" all read the same Sense, and been all of  
" one Mind ? Why did he leave the least  
" Point of our Religion dubious or obscure,  
" when, with a long Foresight, he survey-  
" ed all the Quarrels and Rage, the infi-  
" nite Scandal, the Cruelty and the Blood  
" that in future Ages would be the Con-  
" sequences of religious Disputes ?"

I have been pain'd at my Soul, and felt  
an inward afflicting Heaviness in such a  
Meditation as this ; nor could I ever satisfy  
myself with that prophane Answer which  
some witty Men have given, *viz.* " That  
" God, who might have made the Rules of  
" our Duty plain and undisputed, chose to  
" express them in Words capable of several  
" Interpretations, that Christians might be  
" liable to be led into many different Opi-  
" nions, that hereby God might please him-  
" self with the Variety of Devotions that  
" were paid him ; and that how different  
" soever their Sentiments and Practices  
" might be, yet that his Commands are e-  
" qually obey'd by all the various Kinds of  
" Worship and Service, which the Consci-  
" ences of Men sincerely conceive them-  
" selves bound to offer." This Notion in-

clines to that wild Opinion, which sup-  
poses that any Forms or Methods of Wor-  
ship are all equally acceptable to God, and  
that there are more true Religions than one :  
This favours so much of the *Deist* and the  
*Libertine*, and the Disciples of the *Levia-*  
*than*, that I could never admit it into my  
Assent.

Yet it must be granted that his Wisdom  
had some very valuable Ends to attain in the  
Way of Providence, by permitting so many  
Differences amongst Christians ; and if we  
had been Secretaries to the King of Heaven  
when he form'd his Decrees, we might have  
known perhaps some of these awful *Arcana*  
of his Government ; but who has been his  
Counsellor, or to whom has he given an Ac-  
count of these Matters ? His Paths are in  
the great Deep, and his Providences are  
trackless through the mighty Waters ; *how*  
*unsearchable are his Ways, and his Judgments*  
*past finding out !* I dare not pretend to write  
a compleat *Rationale* on all his infinite and  
impenetrable Designs ; yet my Faith assures  
me that they have all the highest and divine  
Reason in them. And I will take the Free-  
dom here to mention some of those Consi-  
derations that have silenced my clamorous  
Thoughts, pleased my Enquiry, satisfied my  
Conscience, and vanquished the dark Temptation.

ESSAY

VIII.

*First*, By these doubtful Disputables among the accidental Things of Religion, God tries our Sincerity, whether we will hold fast the Substantials. The Constancy and Courage of a Soul devoted to God is exercised and proved amidst the Clamours and noisy Contests of the Men of Party and angry Zeal; and when it persevereth in a Course of Christianity, notwithstanding all these Stumbling Blocks, it approves itself to God, its Judge and Rewarder. The Differences of true Christians in some Parts of their Faith and Worship, have frightened and scandaliz'd the Hypocrite and the giddy Professor; their Heads have been turned round with every Wind of Doctrine, because their Hearts have not been established in the Way of Holiness; they have cast off all the Articles and Practices of Religion, because they find so many Sects divided by their little Particularities, and cannot precisely determine every Circumstance of Truth and Duty.

There were Divisions and Parties, Schisms and Sects in the *Corinthian Church*, and *they must be*, saith the Apostle, *that they that are approved may be made manifest among you*, 1 Cor. xi. 19. Our Lord Jesus forewarns his Disciples, *that Offences will come*, and 'tis not possible that it should be otherwise; *there shall be Variance and Strife in a Man's own Household*: But blessed is he  
whosoever



*whosoever shall not be offended in me; he that* ESSAY  
*persevereth to the end the same shall be saved,* VIII.

Luke xvii. 1. Matt. xi. 6. There are many things in the Christian Religion that become Stones of stumbling, and Rocks of Offence; blessed are the upright that hold on their Course and Resolution for Heaven, and whose Feet stumble not upon these dark Mountains, because of their Neglect to search out the Truth, or their wilful Obstinacy in dangerous Errors.

Secondly, Not only our Sincerity towards God, but our Charity towards fellow-Christians is hereby put to the Trial, and Charity is the very Livery of the Disciples of Christ. Hereby shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples if ye love one another, John xiii.

35. The Lord hath commanded all his Sheep to wear this Mark of Distinction from the World, how different soever their lesser Opinions are among themselves. Where I behold the Image of Christ my Lord stamp'd in legible Characters upon my Neighbour, can I love him with warm Affection, though he never frequents the same Place of Worship with me, though he wears a Garment of another Shape and Colour, prays in a sett Form of Words which I cannot perfectly approve, and subscribes a Creed of different Expressions, tho' the same in Sense and Meaning? Can I receive this good Man into my very Soul, who eats no-

ESSAY thing but Herbs, and will not fit down at  
VIII. my Table because Flesh is eaten there? Can

~ I love him at my Heart that loves *Jesus* the Lord, though he will not religiously observe the Festival of his Birth or Ascension? Or do those little Words *Christmas* and *Holy Thursday* set my Heart at a Distance from him, and make him forfeit all my Charity? Such Queries as these may be a Touch-Stone of our Graces, and the Test of true Love to *Christ* and his Saints.

There seems to be something of this Design in our Lord *Jesus Christ*, when he ordered his Servant *Paul* to write the fourteenth Chapter to the *Romans*, where the Apostle, though he gives a Hint of his own Opinion and Liberty in the Gospel, with regard to Meats and Days, yet he doth not impose the same Observations and Abstinences on other Christians; and though he was inspired, yet he leaves these things still indifferent, and calls them *doubtful Disputations*. Now as the *Trial of our Faith*, through manifold Temptations, is much more precious than that of Gold that perishes, so the Trial of our Love passing through the smoaky Fires of Contention and Dispute, and not mingling therewith, is discovered to be a pure divine Flame, and shall be found to Praise, Honour and Glory at the appearing of *Jesus Christ*, whom having not seen we love, 1 Pet. i. 7.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Perhaps our Lord might leave ESSAY  
 some lesser Points of Religion more obscure- VIII.  
 ly expressed in his Word, because he design-  
 ed to continue a Ministry in his Church to  
 the End of the World, or till he came again.  
 While other Christians have their Hours and  
 Thoughts engrossed by the Cares of this Life,  
 and want Leisure and Skill and Means to  
 acquaint themselves with all the difficult and  
 more abstruse Parts of Religion, 'tis the Bu-  
 siness of the Men that are honoured and  
 employed in the sacred Office to *give them-*  
*selves to Reading*, to search into the hidden  
 Things of God, and explain the more doubt-  
 ful Paragraphs of his Word unto Men.

I grant that the first and grand Design of  
 their Studies and public Labours should be  
 to preach the Gospel of the Grace of God  
 and Reconciliation by *Jesus Christ*, and to  
 make the necessary Articles of Faith and  
 Practice plain to the meanest Soul : But a  
 Minister is also required to converse not on-  
 ly with those Scriptures which will make  
*him wise to final Salvation*, but with those  
 also which may *thoroughly furnish him to*  
*every good Word and Work*, 2 Tim. iii. 17.  
 that he may *know how to speak a Word in*  
*Season to every weary Soul*, and to draw Con-  
 sciences out of Perplexity which are vexed  
 with Scruples of less important Things ; to  
 instruct them in the Mind and Will of *Christ*  
 about the Methods of his Worship, and the  
 Order



ESSAY Order of his Church, *to shew them the Pat-*  
 VIII. *tern and Fashion of the House of God, and*  
 ~~~~~ *all the Ordinances, and the Forms and the*  
*Laws thereof: And that is a Part of his Du-*  
*ty, at proper Seasons, in some of his pub-*  
*lic Ministrations; for he must conceal nothing*  
*of the Counsel of God from them, that may*  
*be useful or profitable to Men: The Me-*  
*thods of his Worship, and Institutions of his*  
*Gospel, should be treasured up in his Heart;*  
*and upon proper Occasions, of private Vi-*  
*sit and Conference, the Lips of the Priest*  
*should make it appear that they keep Know-*  
*ledge, that the Law may be sought at his*  
*Mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord*  
*of Hosts, Mal. ii. 7.*

Not that every Man is bound to pay an implicit Faith and blind Obedience to the Opinions and Dictates of his Bishop or Presbyter. This is Popish Slavery wheresoever it is practised, and Popish Tyranny where it is commanded: But Christians ought to give due Attention to the Advice and Counsel of such as are set over them in the Lord, Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16. Such as are solemnly devoted to the Ministry of the Gospel, and have addicted themselves to the Study and Search of the Scriptures, and are chosen by the People to be their Teachers, and set apart for that Office in the Way they best approve; and so far as their Advice is conformable to the written Word, they are  
 to

to receive it as from some of the Messengers ESSAY  
VIII.  
of *Christ*.

We may humbly suppose a *fourth* Design which God had in his Eye when the sacred Penmen wrote so many Verses of Holy Scripture, which God knew were so difficult to be interpreted; and that is, that no Christian might put the Bible out of his own Hands, or neglect to read and meditate and study the Word of God; and that together with their Reading they might constantly implore the Presence of the Spirit, the Enlightner and the Comforter, to lead them into all Truth. It is the Duty of every Man, so far as his Capacity and Opportunities of Life will admit, to study the holy Scriptures himself, and to see with his own Eyes what he must believe, and what he must practise.

We should imitate the Example of the noble *Bereans*, Acts xvii. 11. *who searched the Scriptures* with Diligence, and brought the Sermons of *Paul* himself unto that sacred Touch-stone, to see if the Things which he spoke were true or no: And after all our Study, we shall find such Difficulties that will convince us of the Necessity of depending upon a higher Teacher, even the Holy Spirit. Our blessed Saviour commands that we search the Scriptures, and pray for the Spirit too, *John* v. 39. *Luke* xi. 9, 13. And *St. Paul* prays unto God that he would give to the Saints which were at *Ephesus*, that  
*Spirit*

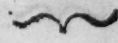
ESSAY *Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation to enlighten*  
 VIII. *the Eyes of their Understanding, Ephes. i.*

17. *this Unction which true Believers have from the Holy One, makes known to them all Things necessary to Salvation, 1 John ii. 20.* And tho' we have no Ground to expect that he will unfold to us every lesser Difficulty, while we live in this World; yet we may humbly hope that in those Things which regard the Forms of his own Worship, and the Means of his own visible Glory amongst Men, he will by Degrees let some divine Rays of Light into the Mind of him that seeks after Truth with great Diligence, fervent Prayer, and most sincere Designs. There are many Instances to be given of plain Christians that have been made the Favourites of the enlightning Spirit, and have arrived at uncommon Knowledge in Christianity by these Methods.

A *Fifth* blessed End, and which is certainly attained in the Providence of God, by leaving so many Disputables in Religion, is, that our Souls are hereby drawn out to long for Heaven, and pant after the State where there is no Contention, no Dispute. This Prospect renders those happy Regions more desireable whilst we are here, and more abundantly welcome hereafter.

It is impossible that any Controversy should there arise to interrupt the Worship of the Church triumphant. It is eternally impossible



fible to divide them into Parties, or to disturb ESSAY  
their Repose. The Doctrines of their Pro- VIII.  
fession are all written as with Sun-Beams,   
they are no longer the Articles of Faith, but  
the Objects of Sight: *We shall be all taught  
of God, we shall see Face to Face, and know  
as we are known.* So much of the Holy  
Spirit dwells in all the Saints, as a perpetual  
Spring of Revelation and Wisdom. The  
Discipline of that Church can occasion no  
Disputes, for the Son of God, in our Na-  
ture, is the Pastor or Bishop, he keeps the  
Keys of Heaven in his own Hands, and the  
Keys of Hell and Death. The Soul that is  
once admitted into that Fellowship shall abide  
like a *Pillar in the Temple of his God, and  
shall go no more out*; but the Hypocrite and  
the Unclean shall never enter there. The  
Worship that is paid there is with perfect  
Uniformity of Mind and Affection amongst  
all the happy Spirits; an unanimous Con-  
sent in Self-abasement, divine Honour and  
Love; and perhaps when our Bodies shall  
be raised again to make a visible Church in  
Heaven, Worship may be perform'd with a  
glorious Liberty, and with such a pleasing  
Variety of Form as glorified Nature shall  
dictate, and our exalted Reason approve;  
but still with the Exercise of the same per-  
fect Love and Delight among the Worship-  
pers, and under the Influence of the same  
Spirit.

ESSAY O the Happiness of that upper Region,  
 VIII. where all the Inhabitants are of one Mind  
 ~~~~~ and one Heart ! Every Doubt shall for ever  
 vanish, for we shall behold all Things without a Cloud. *In thy Light, O Lord, we shall see Light* and enjoy it. Every Quarrel shall for ever cease, for we shall dwell in the Land of Harmony and Love. Tho' our Capacities, perhaps, may be of different Sizes, yet we shall see all divine Truths in the same Light, and therefore our Sentiments, at least in Things of Importance, shall differ no more ; we shall be united to each other in the same Band of Love, nor can our Affections be separated any more for ever : That Light and that Love springs from the ever-blessed God ; God the Creator communicating himself to all his holy and happy Creation, and holding them fast to himself for ever, in and by that glorious Person *Christ Jesus* his Son and Image ; for *in him* must all Things be gathered together in one, and all Things reconciled unto God in him, whether they be Things in Earth or Things in Heaven ; then shall the Prophecy of *Zechariah* be fulfilled, *The Lord shall be King over all the Earth, there shall be one Lord, and his Name one*, in the fullest Meaning of that Expression ; nor shall the Saints be distinguished by different Parties or Denominations, but their Hearts and their Names shall be all one ; according to those  
 Expressions

Expressions of unconceivable Glory, where-  
in our Lord describes the things which are  
truly unspeakable, all the Saints *shall be one,*  
*as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that*  
*they also may be one in us,* John xvii. 21. ESSAY  
VIII.

O with what Pleasure have I often read,  
and methinks would be always reading,  
those Words of a \* great Man spoken on  
the Funeral of his fellow-Saint. “ When  
“ Death shall have discomber’d and set us  
“ free from all sorts of Distempers, and  
“ brought us into the State of perfect  
“ and perfected Spirits, how delectable will  
“ the Society be, when all shall be full of  
“ divine Life, Light, Love and Joy, and  
“ all freely communicate as they have re-  
“ ceived freely! But above all that is con-  
“ ceivable in that other State, how delecta-  
“ ble will their Society be in Worship, in  
“ the unanimous Adoration of the ever blef-  
“ sed God, Father, Son and Spirit! O the  
“ inexpressible Pleasure of this Consocia-  
“ tion in Worship perpetually tendered  
“ with so absolute a Plenitude of Satisfaction  
“ in the Dueness of it, and the Gustful Ap-  
“ prehension of what those Words import,  
“ *Worthy art thou, O Lord:* Each one re-  
“ lishing his own Act with just Self Appro-  
“ bation and high Delight, heightened by  
“ their apprehended perfect Unanimity, and  
“ that there is among them no dissenting

B b

“ Vote.

\* Mr. Howe’s Funeral Sermon for Dr. Bates.



ESSAY "Vote. Whence it cannot be but to wor-  
 VIII. "ship God in Spirit and in Truth, must be  
 "to enjoy him, and that he is not under  
 "any other Notion, a satisfying Object of  
 "our Enjoyment, more than he is the Ob-  
 "ject of our Worship."

These are Beams of Celestial Light for Souls to drink in, and to live upon them while we are passing onward to these fair Mansions through a Wilderness of Doubts and Darknesses. These are Words of Harmony and Love to entertain our Ears, and make us deaf to the Noise of a wrangling and disputing World. This is a Heaven worth wishing for, while we are travelling to it through this tiresome Earth, this unhappy Stage of Vexation and Controversy: To this let us look with Eyes of ardent Expectation, and the devoutest Wishes of Souls: To this let us all aspire and hasten, who have groaned long under our own Ignorance, and been burdened and grieved with the Quarrels of the Christian Churches; and whatsoever Name or Party we have chosen in our divided Opinions, let us unite our Hearts and Voices in this loud Request, *Come Lord Jesus, Come quickly. Amen.*

## E S S A Y IX.

*An Apology for the different Judgments and Practises of sincere Christians that are weak in Knowledge.*

*In a Letter to a Friend.*

**G**IVE me Leave, my dear Friend, to make a charitable Apology for honest and upright Souls, who maintain a strict Course of Piety and Virtue, and yet appear to be unalterably determined for or against the Communion of the Church of *England*, upon very slight and feeble Grounds: Perhaps we shall learn Compassion to the Weaknesses of our fellow Christians, if you and I together meditate on these following Considerations.

Let us take a Survey how many are the Circumstances and various Occurrences of human Life, which do sometimes powerfully determine the Opinions even of good and sober Men, to one or the other side of this Controversy, whether they shall fix their

ESSAY Communion in the Church of *England*,  
IX. or amongst those who separate from it.

Here the first thing that naturally occurs, is the *Education of different Persons*, which has a mighty Influence to form their Opinions, and to fix their Practice; and this, it must be confess'd, is not in a Man's own Choice; the Providence of the great and blessed God, the Over-ruler of all things, determines this Affair in a wise and holy manner, whatever the final Event may be.

*Jonathan* goes to worship every Lord's Day where his Father goes, and as the Child was never led to hear a Sermon at a publick Church, so the Youth grows up in a groundless Aversion to it, and the Man stands at a wider Distance, and can hardly be perswaded to venture in.

By Use and Custom from his very Childhood, he understands the Methods of the *Dissenters* Worship, and the Terms that are used in their Sermons; and if by any strange Occasion he is led to the *Church of England*, he finds no Profit by hearing a Clergyman preach, for he does not clearly take in the Expressions and the Meaning; and it must be acknowledged, many of them have a different way of managing the Word of God in their Explications of it, different Phrases and Modes of Expression, and too many of them preach Doctrines different from their own Articles and our common Faith; these



things are shocking and offensive to the Ear, ESSAY  
rather than instructive or edifying to a new IX.  
Hearer.

Besides, *Jonathan* has imbibed long Prejudices against the Modes of Worship and Ceremonies of the Church, the Forms, the Gestures, the Vestments, the Responses, &c. and his Soul is thereby mightily unfitted for Edification by the Prayers of the *Church of England*, that are mingled and interwoven with them; his Palate is so much disgusted with this sort of Entertainment before hand, that he either disrelishes or neglects whatever solid and wholesome Food is set before him in the Sermon that follows: I will not say, there is nothing of this Folly owing to the Influences of his Education; but it is hard, if not impossible, to amend or prevent all the Faults of this kind in the Education of Children, by the best and wisest of Parents\*.

These

\* Since I have Occasion, in this Place, to mention the Education of Children, amongst Persons of the *Establish'd Church*, and those that have separated from it, I could scarce excuse it to my own Conscience, if I should neglect to make this *solemn Remark* on both (*viz.*) that there is something very dangerous that is early impressed on the Minds of Children of the one Party and the other, and they unhappily learn it from the different respective Catechisms in which they are instructed.

The Children who are educated in the *Church of England*, as soon as they have learnt to answer *what is their Name?* they are immediately told in the next Answer,

## ESSAY


These Things joined together, put a  
 . IX. strong Bias upon the Judgment of the Man, and

that in their Baptism, *They are made the Members of Christ, the Children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.* This arises from the Doctrine they are generally taught, that Baptism and Regeneration are much the same thing, or that all Men are regenerated by being baptised; whereas in Scripture, Baptism is but an Emblem and Representation of such a Change of the Heart, as Regeneration requires and implies; and for want of this Distinction, the Children usually grow up thro' all their Stations in Life, without enquiring whether they have had any such real Change in their Souls, as includes in it Repentance for Sin, and a turn of Soul towards God and Godliness, whereby a Man is born again and becomes a new Creature.

And this necessary Change, upon which the Favour of God, and an Interest in the Salvation of *Christ*, and the Kingdom of Heaven depend, is very grossly and shamefully neglected by them through their whole Lives, they always supposing, as they have been taught, that all this Work is done in Baptism.

And for this Reason many Divines of the Church of *England* have heartily wished that either these Words in the Catechism were a little altered, or that this Answer should never be taught to Children without explaining the Meaning of it.

Among the *Dissenters*, one Part of the Education is usually learning the Catechism written by the *Assembly of Divines at Westminster*. Now in the 19th Answer it is said, *That all Mankind by their Fall, are under the Wrath and Curse of God, and so made liable to all the Miseries in this Life, to Death itself, and to the Pains of Hell for ever:* And some Persons have been so grossly unwise, as to assert under this Influence, that there are Children of a Span long suffering the Vengeance of God in Hell, for their Interest in the Sin of *Adam*. Now the very Hint of such a Notion frights Children terribly, and

and it is exceeding difficult to be removed ; ESSAY  
 and 'tis evident that his Prayers, his Practice IX.  
 in Religion, his secret Acts of Devotion,   
 are all regulated by the Instructions he has  
 received from his Parents or some of his  
 Teachers : This makes his Spirit grow un-  
 easy under ceremonious Forms, and he is  
 quite untun'd for Devotion by the very  
 and while they are required to love God with all their  
 Hearts, it gives them a very terrible and cruel Notion of  
 the great and blessed God, who has ordain'd young Chil-  
 dren to these everlasting Torments for the Sin of *Adam*.

There are some that deny this Answer, and renounce  
 this Doctrine roundly.

Indeed there is one Author that has endeavoured to  
 explain it in a moderate way, and to make a just Di-  
 stinction upon this Subject, and that is in the last Que-  
 stion of a Book called the *Ruin and Recovery of Man-  
 kind*. There it is shewn that all good Christians by  
 their Faith in *Christ*, are become the Children of *Abra-  
 ham*, and that they and their infant Children have an  
 Interest in the Promise made to *Abraham*, Gal. iii. 26.  
 29. (*viz.*) that *God would be their God, and the God of  
 their Seed*, which gives abundant Hope for the Children  
 of good Parents dying in Infancy, that they are trans-  
 lated to the Blessedness of Heaven, and the Hope of a  
 joyful Resurrection by the *Covenant of Abraham*. And  
 it is the Children of the Wicked, who have never ac-  
 cepted of the Covenant of Grace, are left under the  
 Curse, *i. e.* of temporal Death, which *Adam* had incur-  
 red for himself and his Posterity, and that without any  
 Prediction or Promise of any Resurrection at all. Now  
 I speak of those who never sinned actually, nor enjoyed  
 a State of personal Trial for themselves in this World.  
*See the original Writer.*

When these things will be corrected in the Educa-  
 tion of Children, of the one Side or the other, it is only  
 the Providence of God can determine.



ESSAY Sound of the Organ. These Things must  
 IX. needs have a mighty Force on the Minds of  
 young sincere Creatures beginning their  
 Course of Religion and Christianity, to estab-  
 lish them in the *Nonconformist* Way.

And I might also add, how rude and indecent a Thing the plain and natural Worship of the Dissenters appears to one, that has been bred up to Ornament and Ceremony in the several Parts of Worship in the establish'd Church.

By Education and Custom, a particular Form of Religion is so mingled with their Nature, and wrought into their Constitution, that you might as soon alter their Palate, and change their Taste of Meats, as you can persuade their Souls to dislike the Ministry under which they have been brought up, and to forsake the Mode of Worship to which they have been trained. They are so positive they are in the right, that they never had any Thought of calling these Things to a new Examination.

*Secondly*, The Prejudice of the Mind in favour of the *Dissenters* grows yet stronger, if *Jonathan* has found his Soul awakened to a Fear of Hell, and been effectually convinced of Sin by the Terrors of the Law under the Preaching of some *Boanerges*, some Son of Thunder in a Meeting-house; and has been afterwards led gently into the Knowledge of *Jesus Christ* the Saviour, and  
 has

has been taught to apply himself unto him  
for Salvation by humble Faith.

ESSAY  
IX.

If the Spirit of God has made the Preaching of Pardon and Grace, by a Dissenting Minister, effectual to calm the Surges of his troubled Conscience, and to lead him in the Way of Peace and Holiness towards Heaven, perhaps he feels his Passions refined, his sinful Appetites mortified, his Temper changed from earthly and carnal, to spiritual and heavenly, how naturally will his whole Soul be carried out to love this Ministry? and he would not willingly absent himself one Day from the Teachings of this *Barnabas*, this Son of Consolation; he despises all the finer Flourishes of Eloquence, he can take no Pleasure in the more polite, and perhaps more argumentative Discourse of a Doctor or a Bishop in the *Church of England*; but where he has found Light and Food, and Rest for his dark and distressed and hungry Soul, thither he will go constantly to Worship, and he calls that the Sanctuary of the Lord, without once enquiring whether a Parish Church may not be the Sanctuary of the Lord too; nay perhaps his Passion for the *Dissenters* may rise so high as to deny the Presence of God in the Assemblies of the establish'd Church, or to allow very little of it there.

And by the same false Method of Reasoning may a Churchman, whose Soul has  
been

ESSAY been brought to Repentance and Holiness

IX. by the Ministry of the public Church, on which he has attended, almost hate the Name of a Nonconformist, and severely inveigh against them all as Schismatics and foolish Teachers, when perhaps he never ventur'd into a Meeting-house, nor heard one Sermon in any of their Assemblies.

So far is it possible for Piety, Ignorance and Prejudice to meet in the same Mind: But our God, who knows the Frame of human Nature, looks down and pities and forgives. A hearty Tendency towards God, and a Pursuit of Heaven is well-pleasing in his Sight; tho' perhaps the Traveller, thro' Ignorance, takes many a wrong Step, and performs many a Duty not exactly conformable to the Directions of the Word.

Now, tho' this Argument be sufficient to determine him to be a *Christian*, in Opposition to other Religions, because other Religions have not this Power to sanctify him, yet it ought not to be sufficient for ever to determine him to a particular Party of Christians, because it was not the particular Opinions of that Party, but the substantial and great Doctrines of Christianity or the Gospel, which are professed and pretended to by both Parties, that were so powerful to the turning of his Heart towards God.

After all this Discourse, I would not be understood as tho' I encouraged this Laziness



ness of Men, and Neglect of due and just Reasoning: no, for Reason is the Talent that God hath given to be used in the Affairs of Religion, and he hath given us the Rule of his own Word for our Determination, by which all our Worship ought to be regulated, and not by human Inventions; and Men are highly guilty in their Neglect hereof: But a gracious God will forgive, for he knows our Frame and our Frailty.

I believe God doth accept of such inward, sincere and experimental Arguments as vulgar Christians use to make or keep themselves *Churchmen* or *Dissenters*, *Calvinists* or *Arminians*. If they feel their Souls raised to a more heavenly Frame, and effectually engaged to the Love of God, Religion and Justice, by attending occasionally on a Ministry different from their Education, sometimes they will be ready to separate even from a true Church to which they belonged, for want of knowing the Guilt and Terrors and Damnation that some Men include in that hard Word, *Schism*; and I persuade myself that a gracious God will accept of their upright Designs and their honest Motives, will pardon their Separation, tho' it should prove unwarrantable, and bless their new Communion to the Advantage of their Souls.

*Thirdly.* But suppose a Man should forcibly divest himself of all former Aversions

ESSAY and Inclinations to the separate or the establish'd Churches, and enter into a sober  
 IX. Search, and solemn Debate with himself about the Merits of the Cause ; how few are there, whose necessary Affairs of Life allow them Time enough to go through the Study of these laborious and intangled Controversies ? How small a Part of Mankind that are born to secular Affairs, can, in their few Hours of Leisure, find out the Depth of some of these Difficulties ? Who is sharp enough on the Sudden to distinguish Truth in the Midst of the Clouds of Dust that are cast on it by the litigious Wrangle of all Parties ?

The Soul of many a Tradesman is but just of a Size with his Shop and Business, and hath not Strength of Parts or Improvement to attain great and accurate Knowledge in any Thing besides ; and those whose Ingenuity is greater, may easily waste all the spare Hours of their Life in treading the Mazes of Dispute about Forms and Ceremonies, and at last find themselves bewilderd : Now I question whether such a Man's Head would ly easy upon a dying Pillow, who had spent his Time among Briars and Thorns, and neglected the Fruit of the Tree of Life, or tasted but very little of it ; he has been dwelling upon the Moss and the Ivy, and not gathered the Product of those eminent Branches of our holy Religion,

ligion, whence he might have extracted sweet Cordials for a languishing and fainting Hour.

ESSAY  
IX.


*Fourthly.* Again, how very few are there amongst the giddy Race of Men that can so far annihilate their old Opinions, and refrain so long from embracing new ones, till they have made a thorough Scrutiny into the Arguments and Pretensions on both Sides? Who can dwell for Months together in the uneasy State of Dubitation? Who is there that has Power enough over his own Thoughts, as to hold his Judgment in Suspence for a considerable Season, till the Matter in question be fairly debated, and brought to an Issue in the Court of Reason and Scripture? How ready are we to incline our Assent one Way or another, as the various Occurrences of Life present Shadows of Argument for either Opinion? A Story of a wicked Clergyman of the Church will warp the enquiring Soul of a Plebeian towards a Meeting-house; and an old Song of *Charles the Martyr* will determine another's Judgment against the cruel Dissenters, and make him a compleat Churchman. A Flash of Rhetoric, a Show of Reason, a warm Sermon, and Affections raised by a *Tillotson* at *Westminster*, or a *Mead* at *Pinner's-Hall*, will immediately turn the Mind from its Equilibrium; and you know when a Balance is just turned, tho' it be but by a Grain of Weight,



ESSAY Weight, it falls effectually on that Side, and  
IX. sometimes almost irrecoverably too.

When we have thrown off all old Prejudices, 'tis not easy to secure one's self from new ones. When we have so far gained the Victory over Education and Custom as to retain none of our antient Opinions, we are apt to fall insensibly under the Power of the opposite Doctrines, and become Captives and Slaves to new Notions, merely because they are new. Novelty is as great a Prejudice to fair Reasoning as Antiquity; tho' perhaps not so universally prevailing. And there's many a giddy and headstrong Youth that has hastily embraced Maxims and Practices contrary to those of his Parents, to show how bravely he has broke all the Fetters of Education, and to make it appear that he thinks freely. When we push the Boat off from the Shore where it has long stuck in the Mud, 'tis hard to prevent its being stranded on the adverse Side. 'Tis exceeding difficult to keep the Mind in this Medium of Suspence till right Reason determine it; 'tis very troublesome to maintain the Judgment in a Poise till some weighty and solid Argument sink one of the Scales downward, and equitably decide the depending Strife of Opinions; there is Need of continual caution and wary Motions of Thought: A doubting Spirit is in Pain, and willing to be released. We are very desirous

to

to believe somewhat, tho' upon slight ESSAY  
Grounds, that our Souls may be at Ease, IX.  
and fall to Practice. 

*Fifthly.* But suppose Men should have  
Leisure, and Books and other Advantages,  
joined with Resolution and Patience enough  
to endure the Pain of Dubitation, and the  
long Fatigue of deep Study and Thought-  
fulness; yet how small is the Number of  
those that are capable to distinguish betwixt  
real and apparent Reason; especially in Sub-  
jects where the Differences are of so nice  
and intricate a Kind? How few Under-  
standings are so acute, how few Judgments  
so solid and just, so well form'd and well-  
improv'd, as to determine Controversies so  
long and so much darkened? Who can see  
thro' all the false Shows and Pretensions of  
Argument, and discern the true Gold from  
that which only glisters?

Turn your Eyes inward, my Friend, and  
behold a Soul there that has more Know-  
ledge and Judgment than Hundreds of the  
Animals that are round about you, and that  
you are forced to converse with; and yet af-  
ter all your unbiaſſed Searches and Labours,  
and earnest Prayers, how hard a Thing you  
find it to resolve the Point, whether you  
ought to remain in the Communion of a  
Dissenting Church, or become a Separatist  
from them, and unite yourself to the Church  
of *England*. Now, if all your Leisure, your  
Ad-

ESSAY Advantages, and your Application, cannot

IX. fix your Assent and Practice, infer then how vain a Thing it is to expect that Reason and Argument should constantly determine and govern a blind, a rash, a ruin'd, and a wretched World.

I confess, in Things of greater Importance, and Necessity to Salvation, our Directions ly so plain, as to lead the most stupid Souls that are honest and sincere, to the Knowledge of Truth and Duty, unless it be here and there a Man who violently breaks through the very Language of Scripture, and runs into great Errors or Irregularity of Practice : But in Things of less Moment, how impossible is it that the generality of Mortals should build every lesser Opinion of theirs upon solid Foundations and unshaken Grounds ? Or how can we expect they should be able to defend every smaller Circumstance of their Practice by just Reasonings ?

If I were to recapitulate these Things in short, I would draw up my charitable Conclusion thus :

Since our first Apostacy from God has so perverted and spoiled our rational Powers, and enslaved our Minds to so many Prejudices and Passions ; since the Impressions of Education and Custom are unavoidable and necessary, deep and strong ; since the Affairs of the World that is under a divine Curse,



Curse, are so justly and unhappily ill constituted; since Capacity, Leisure, Application, Humility, and Prayer, are all found together but in very few Persons; and since the divine Oracles, in Matters less necessary, have so much Obscurity in themselves, and so much thicker Darkness cast upon them by contending Parties, why should we be so much amazed or so angry, to see so many different Sentiments and Practices amongst Men of honest Piety, and desirous of Truth? ESSAY IX.

Farewel, thou dear Companion of my Studies, and if your Light and Knowledge should be so far improved by your further Enquiries, as to lead you away from that Communion, and those Methods of Worship wherein we have so often and so delightfully join'd; yet I hope that upon the Review of this Letter, you will maintain a very charitable Opinion of

*Your uninlightened Friend, &c.*

*T H E E N D.*

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